

An Enquiry into the
REJECTION
OF THE
CHRISTIAN MIRACLES
BY THE
HEATHENS.

Wherein is shewed,
The low Opinion which they had of MIRACLES
in general; and this accounted for from their
Situation and Circumstances.

*Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos Lemures, portentaque Tbesfala rides? Hor.*

By **W. WESTON, B.D.**
Fellow of St. JOHN'S College, CAMBRIDGE,
and Vicar of *Campden, Gloucestershire.*

CAMBRIDGE,
Printed by J. BENTHAM Printer to the University;
for W. THURLBOURN Bookseller in Cambridge,
J. and P. KNAFTON in Ludgate-Street, C. BATHURST
in Fleetstreet, and J. BEECROFT at the Bible in
Lombard-Street, London.

MDCCLXVI.

14

REFLECTION

OF THE

CHRISTIAN MIRACLES

BY THE

HEAVENLY



304

W. WESTON, B.D.

Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge,
expected Year of Canon, Geography.

CAMBRIDGE

Printed by J. BARNARD, Printer to the University,
at W. FIDELITY, Bookbinder in Cambridge,
J. BARNARD, in London Street, Cambridge,
and J. BARNARD, at the Bell in
London Street, London.

MCCCLXVI

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
Earl of Gainsborough.

My LORD,

THOUGH I am not unacquaint-
ed with the usual forms of
Dedications, and have chosen a Patron
that is every way qualified to receive
justly the praises contained in them,
yet still that is a method of addressing
you, which neither your Lordship
expects, nor I intend.

And as I have some reason to pass by
the panegyrics of that kind of addressees,
so I have likewise to pass by their
requests, and I shall not here desire

ii DEDICATION.

your Lordship to take upon you the defence of this Treatise against the censure and opposition it may meet with: for as I know I should but oppress your modesty with the former, so I ought not to oppress your generosity with the latter; and if it must be thought but a strange sort of compliment on the one hand to hurt one of your most shining qualities; it must likewise on the other hand be a strange sort of gratitude to give you farther trouble for favours already received.

But I am so far from having the least design of this, that I choose to have it stand in the front of the Book, that I do not make your Lordship answerable for any the minutest error or

DEDICATION iii

unpopular notion contained in it. — I have had some experience of the difficulty of pleasing all in any subject of Religion, and this difficulty will not at all be lessened in such a hazardous one as is now before us; the froward and contentious spirit therefore of party in Religion I take upon myself to encounter; and whatever enemies either of this or any other sort may arise to me in the prosecution of the present attempt, I beg your Lordship would remember that they are not *yours* but *mine*.

But giving you no trouble is not enough for this address; I was willing to express a grateful sense of the many obligations conferred upon me, and make such a return as is expected from

DEDICATION.

Persons in a condition so much inferiour to yours : the best compliment therefore that I can make your Lordship on this occasion is the true one ; that I have a good opinion of the present performance myself, and wrote it with honest intentions ; otherwise it would either have never seen the light at all ; or if it had, would at least never have had a Name so much honoured by me as your Lordship's prefixed to it.

If therefore the event is answerable to my wishes, and this Treatise should contribute any thing to the confirmation of Christianity, I then shall partake of that pleasure which I know your Lordship will receive, who are so devoted to the Religion as well as Govern-

DEDICATION.

Government of your Country; if it should fail, it yet will not rob me of the true satisfaction in meaning well to my fellow Christians in the establishment of our common faith, and to your Lordship in taking this public opportunity of acknowledging myself,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most obliged, most obedient

and most humble servant

W. WESTON.

DEDICATION

Government of your Country; if it
should fail, it yet will not rob me
of the true satisfaction in meeting
well to my fellow Christians in the
celebration of our common faith,
and your friendship in taking this
opportunity of acknowledging

the many favors and
the many favors and
the many favors and

For the many favors and
the many favors and
the many favors and

And with humble
and with humble
and with humble

W. WESTON

THE P R E F A C E.

*T*HERE seem at this time of the World to be but two reasons in general for making any work public; one of which is, that what it contains should be new; the other, that it should be said in a better manner than has been done before; and both of them are so difficult to be accomplished, that few would be so forward as they are in loading the press, if these reasons had the weight with them which they deserved.

For as to the former, considering the multitude of Books which since the art of Printing have been poured in upon us, it must not only be difficult to find out any Subject that is new, but it must likewise make no inconsiderable part of our Study to know when it is so:—and as to the latter, it is so uncertain in its own nature, and more especially so, considering the prejudices of Authors, that a Man must have a more than ordinary stock of vanity to offer this reason to the World.

For though all are soon perswaded that there is something excellent or agreeable in their own compositions above those of others; yet this very perswasion joined to some small experience in Books
and

and Men would incline them to act with great diffidence and caution ; since from hence they might quickly see how easy it is to be convinced that they are Originals, and how hard it is to be so.

Now as nothing is more true than this observation, and nothing more easy than for all Men to come at the truth of it ; it is an unpardonable fault in any one that sets up for an Author, not to know or not to follow it : the World has at least a right to expect so much sense from one that pretends to instruct it ; since without this he gives but a poor specimen of his power to accomplish his designs.

I suppose the Reader is convinced by this preliminary observation, that I have no suspicions of being myself an example of the just censure contained in it ; and indeed I have not ; for as to the manner of this performance I claim no merit from it ; and as to the matter, I have taken at least so much pains as to be well assured that it is new.

But yet the Reader I imagine will not like that this matter should be dismissed here ; he will naturally be inclined to ask, how it could possibly happen that in so important a Subject as the present, so important a part of it should be passed over ; and what was the reason that Christians in every Age, and especially in the present, (when this matter has been so strictly examined) should

PREFACE.

iii

should have so little regard to such a weighty objection; and such besides as must naturally occur to every one that thinks.

Though this question be indeed very natural for every Reader to ask, yet I hope he will be so candid as to excuse me from resolving it; since it will put me on the necessity of shewing that Christians could not explain this difficulty or would not; that there was something so exceedingly perplexed and intricate in the subject itself, or something so critical and dangerous in the solution of it, that it was always thought proper to be kept from view.

The former of these things no one can say, who has any notion of the labours and abilities of the Christian world; the latter no one ought to say, who is going to engage in this undertaking.

Instead therefore of telling the Reader why other People did not do it; I shall tell him why I did: I had long been more perplexed with the present difficulty about Miracles than all the rest put together; it seemed to me extremely odd that such numbers of Men for so long a series of years could so easily reject what to Christians in general, and myself in particular seemed to be of so great weight; this put me upon looking for some solution of it amongst the variety of Authors on this subject both antient and modern; but I looked
in

in vain; nay what is worse, I found the difficulty encrease upon me as I read, inasmuch as I could discover a visible neglect of Miracles amongst the Heathen Writers, without any examination of this singularity amongst the Christian.

The practice of Magic indeed I found frequently charged by Christians upon the Heathens; and by the Heathens upon Christians; but this in so loose and indefinite a manner, and with so great appearances of distress and vanity in their respective charges, that it became necessary to enquire into the reputed power of this art, and fix those odd and fantastic ideas which the Antients of almost all denominations had joined to it.

In doing this I found that by the interposition of *Dæmons*, which in the religious Magic was always called in to its assistance, it became in the case before us a most efficacious and extensive principle, but yet that it was far from being alone sufficient to bring about the effect proposed.

For since both parties were perswaded of the mighty power of this Art, and yet one of them admitted the Christian Miracles, whilst the other rejected them, it is plain that some other circumstances must have an influence over the conduct of the latter.

These circumstances I have resolved into those other particulars which are considered at large
in

PREFACE.

in this work; how justly the Reader must judge, but if they have the same effect upon him, as they had upon me, I shall not think my time ill employed.

Having said all that I think proper concerning the general view of this treatise; I come now to say something to what may be objected to some particulars; one of which is the rejection of all the Miracles of the Heathen World: with this I am aware some well meaning Persons may be offended, as having an ill aspect on all Miracles whatsoever, and in our Saviour's expression plucking up the Tares and the Wheat together.

To these I shall return this answer, which I know they would reverence on some occasions, and ought likewise to do on this:—What communication hath light with darkness, and what concord hath God with Belial?—How is the truth affected by the rejection of falsehood? or rather how can they possibly flourish and subsist together?—What comparison is there between the thin and shadowy forms of Miracles, which fly before the first appearance of the morning light; and those solid and substantial ones of God; which both in regard to their nature and end have the most visible marks of wisdom, greatness and power?

But if the Miracles of the Heathens were in reality so vain, what occasion was there,

it will be farther said, to have been so long on this subject? even to mention them on this supposition would have been enough: Indeed I have in regard to many of them done little more, and in regard to some of them not so much: and if that Chapter appears long to the Reader, it is rather from the multitude of the Heathen Miracles themselves, than from my confutation of them.

On which account I am under some apprehensions from another quarter, that I have not considered them so much as I ought; and a good Deist will perhaps say, that as he examines one by one the Miracles of Christ, so we should examine one by one the Miracles of the Heathens.

I am not ignorant how difficult it is to satisfy contending parties in a matter of such importance as the present, and therefore I shall not attempt it: when one of them however thinks that I have said too much, and the other that I have said too little, there seems to be no great necessity for any apology at all: — When both parties are displeased, there is often a strong presumption that neither of them ought.

But this is not the only place in this treatise wherein I shall probably meet with the same disagreement of opinion: in those other topics which are made use of to account for the conduct of the Heathens; some will perhaps think that I have
been

been too long, others that I have been too short; in reply to which I shall only say, that if I must displease some of my Readers on one side, I should be glad that it was on the former; it being much better in my opinion to have said something that might be spared, than to omit any thing necessary to the illustration of so useful a subject.

In the end of the Chapter upon the Heathen Miracles, I admit those wrought by Moses amongst the Egyptians, though all the rest are rejected; and the reason that I give for it is, because we have unerring authority to convince us of the truth of them: this reason I know lies naked and exposed in that place to the insults of the Deist, because this unerring authority must depend upon those Miracles which I there take for granted.

As that therefore was an improper place to shew the reasons in general for the admission of those Miracles on which we rightly ground our faith, I thought it best to prefix two Chapters on that subject to the beginning; that so we might see the nature of the rule, which we were in this case to go by, and how much the Heathen Wonders fell short of it.

And because this part of the subject had been so often treated of before by the ablest Christian Writers; I say as little as I well can on what others

others have said, and confine myself chiefly to the latest objections, and especially to that of Mr. Chubb against the want of Universality in our Religion.

But besides this general reason for these parts of the work, I have one which regards myself in particular; which is, that without them it would have looked odd to make public a treatise which consisted only of the rejection of all the Miracles of Paganism, and shewing in various lights the very low opinion which the Heathens had of them in general, without any demonstration that there were some, of which they ought to have had a better.

I had indeed intimated this in a few passages in the conclusion; enough perhaps for the world to acquit me of any sinister design; but what the world would, I knew some sour and dogmatical men would not; such as professing themselves defenders of Christianity with a spirit that is the scandal of it, are very forward in such censures as they ought not to make, and such suspicions as they ought not to entertain.

Nay I am not sure that even now I shall escape their Anathema; since it is their custom generally to be displeased with every thing that does not fall in with their fixed and settled sentiments; and every defence of Religion that is out of their way, wants another to support it.

PREFACE.

11

I should not however, I assure them, trouble myself about it, if there was occasion; but indeed there is not: — If I mistake not the genius and disposition of these men; there are some People with them that can do no harm to Religion, and others that can do no good: if therefore I should be of the former number (of which there is no great danger) an apology would be needless; if of the latter, in vain.

In this public appeal therefore to the world I shall take my leave of this stubborn and intractable part of it with the following declaration; That if all had been like them, I should either by doing nothing, have never incurred their displeasure at all, or if I had, should patiently, as became me, have sat down under the weight of it, without ever attempting to mollify hearts that knew not how to yield.

But that I may not be thought one of this untractable disposition myself, by setting out with so high an hand in a part of a work that is always designed to bespeak the favour of our Readers: I am glad that I can declare with the greatest sincerity, that I know numbers of all denominations in the present age, to whose decision I should choose to submit the most nice and hazardous attempt: such as set out in their enquiries according to the Apostle's instruction, with a resolution to try all
b things;

things; and try them only to hold fast that which is right: — Such as in consequence of this examine with care, and judge with candour: such as may insensibly be drawn to admit a wrong opinion, but will not pertinaciously maintain it: — Such as can condemn the Doctrine without the Person, or the Person without the Doctrine: — Such as can convict a man of errors in the defence of his Religion without despising his abilities: — Such as can despise his abilities without suspecting his faith, or suspect his faith without arraigning his integrity: — Such in short as constantly setting before them that bright example of meekness and humility proposed for their imitation, determine all things with that evenness of judgement and sweetness of temper, which is a credit to their faith, and an ornament to their profession.

To such as these I promise to explain or enforce, to correct or alter, to retract either in the whole or part whatever shall be judged amiss: nay, I will proceed, as far as Protestantism will permit, in that blind and implicit obedience which the Catholics pay to their Spiritual Director; being thoroughly satisfied that the highest pitch of infallibility, which human perfections can claim, must be HERE.

THE

THE CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

Of the sufficiency of the Christian Miracles to prove the Divinity of the Christian Religion.

Miracles in general the greatest proof of the Christian Religion. p. 1. Defended, *First*, against those who deny the possibility of them. 3, 4, 5, &c. *Secondly*, Against the *Jews*, who impute them to *Beelzebub*. p. 8. Against those who think the want of universality in our Religion a sufficient bar to their credit. 10, &c. Against those who say they cannot prove a false doctrine to be true: and those who affirm that they have no connection with the doctrine. 18, 19.

CHAP. II.

Of the Evidence of the Christian Miracles.

They have the best sort of historical evidence. p. 21. The Apostles could have no design of founding an Ecclesiastical power. 23, 24. They could not be Enthusiasts or Madmen. 28.

The concurring testimony of some of the Heathens with that of the Apostles, about Miracles. p. 30. Why others say nothing of this matter, and why *Josephus* is silent in particular. 31, 32. Why no greater evidence ought to be expected. 33, 34.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. III.

Of the low opinion which the Heathens had of Miracles.

The reason of engaging in this work. p. 37.
Christ's Miracles undervalued and scorned by *Hierocles*
and *Pilate*. 40.

The acts of *Pilate* when not to be credited. 41.

Gallio careless about the Christian Religion. 43.

Pythagoras, *Aristeas* and *Jamblichus* not much
esteemed for their Miracles. 44. Nor *Vespasian*
nor *Adrian*. 46, &c.

The Miracle of the fiery eruptions which hindered
the building of the Temple of *Jerusalem*, con-
sidered. 51.

The opinion which *Celsus* had of Miracles. 54.

The opinion of *Julian*. 57. Of the *Epicureans*,
Aristotelians, and *Platonists*. 58. of the *Egyptian*
Gymnosophists. 61. of *Apollonius*. 63. of the
antient Lawgivers. 64. of *Mahomet* 65. of *Jerom*.
66. of *Lactantius* *ibid.* of *Tertullian* 67. of Saint
Austin. 69. of Saint *Paul*. 71. of *Maimonides*, and
the *Jews* 73.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Vanity of the Heathen pretensions to Miracles.

The Miracle of *Aristeas*. p. 80. Those of *Pythagoras*.
81. The Dæmon of *Socrates*. 85. The Metempsy-
chosis. 89. The Dæmon of *Cardan*, and the reason
why it is eclipsed as well as all others by that of
Socrates. 93. The Miracles of *Apollonius*. 95.
The

CONTENTS.

The odd solution of the Magical Feast in the *Indies* by the learned *Olearius*. 102.

The whole life of *Apollonius*, in whatever light it be considered, extremely surprizing. 108, &c.

The Miracles of the later Platonists recorded by *Eunapius*. 111.

The ridiculous one of *Jamblicus*, and the ridiculous manner of relating it. 112.

The Miracles of *Æsculapius* better supported, but yet not true. 115.

Of Prodigies. 116. The suspicions of them by the Antients 117. by *Livy*. *ibid.* by *Cicero*. 118.

The whimsical foundation of Augury in the cutting of the Whetstone by *Nævius*. *ibid.* A strange circumstance of the like nature in the Election of the *Roman* Magistrates. *ibid.*

Even the Poets seem to disbelieve Prodigies at the very time they describe them. 121. *Claudian* unfortunate on this occasion. 123.

For what end Prodigies were invented. 126.

The case of *Drusus*. 127. of *Nicias*. *ibid.* of *Themistocles*. 130. The hardy declaration of *Fontenelle* on this occasion. 131.

The passion for the marvellous, another source of Prodigies, and of the influence it has had even under the light of Christianity. 132, &c.

The Apparition of Saint *George* and Saint *Victor* in the Holy Wars, in support of the Christians. 134.

The truth of it sworn before the whole Army. 135. and yet very suspicious. *ibid.*

CONTENTS.

The reason why *Greece* abounded with Oracles, and *Rome* with Prodigies. 136.

Moses ranked with the *Egyptian* Magicians by *Pliny*, and with the most distinguished ones of all ages by *Apuleius*. 138.

The rest of the Heathen Wonders passed over, and only a part of the large list of antient Conjurers mentioned. 140.

One selected from this tribe for a purpose important to Christianity. 143.

The folly of the Christians in burning the Heathen Writings against their Religion. 144.

CHAP. V.

Of the influence which the Intercommunity of Gods must have over the conduct of the Heathens.

The conclusion which follows from this principle illustrated by that monstrous train of consequences which arise from Divination. 147.

All sorts of Religion tolerated at *Rome*. 152. Some of them extremely corrupt. 153. Most of them tending to debase the Gods, and of consequence the Miracles ascribed to them. *ibid*.

Cicero laughs at his Country Religion. 154. and at Divination. 155. This must enlighten the People's minds, and make them disregard the Miracles ascribed to that art. 156, 157.

Cicero designed his books of Divination to be made public. 158. The infidelity of the *Romans* much heightened by this means. 169.

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. VI.

Of the influence which the impositions of Oracles must have over the conduct of the Heathens.

The whole face of things about Oracles miraculous. 173. many impostures confessed. 175. and some of a very infamous nature. 176.

On what account it is necessary to shew that every thing relating to Oracles was imposture. 177.

The reasons of *Banier* confuted. 179, &c. The chief answer to them illustrated by the case of *Diagoras* the Atheist. 192.

The case of human Sacrifices considered against the Jesuit *Baltus*. 194. He defends Oracles just in the same ambiguous manner, in which they were formerly delivered. 197.

The testimony of the Fathers on the subject of Oracles very exceptionable. 201.

The strange story of Saint *Jerom*. 202. and of *Ruffinus*. 205. Both to be credited with much caution, since they so zealously contribute to the imposition of mankind. 210.

The testimony of the Fathers yet farther invalidated by their disagreement with each other. 211. how they are to be reconciled with themselves. 212.

Clemens Alexandrinus believed all Oracles were Impostures. 217. His testimony considered at large. 218, &c. The Jesuit *Baltus* put to miserable shifts on this occasion. 224, 225, 226. *Le Clerc* in the same distress, 229. His distress relieved. 231.

CONTENTS.

The Heathens had a very low opinion of the ejection of Devils. 231. The manner of performing this operation. 232.

The various appellations which Impostors gave to the disorders of the possessed according to *Hippocrates*. 233.

One of the Philosophers in the *Philopseudes* of *Lucian* actually saw a Devil come out of the possessed, which was of a colour very happily imagined, that of smoak. *ibid*.

The receipt of *Josephus* to cast out Devils. 234. His diminution of this sort of Miracles, as well as all others accounted for. *ibid*.

The Catholic pretentions to Exorcism. 234.

Father *Gaufrè* casts out a Devil which had got into the foot of a Nun, and afterwards resolves to worship him, which the Devil would not permit. 235.

CH A P. VII.

Of the influence which Magic must have over the conduct of the Heathens.

The Origin of Magic in the *East*. p. 237. at first concerned about Religion. 238. afterwards falls into disrepute. 240. and it was capital to charm a field. 241.

The power of this art generally believed. 242. divided into two sorts. 247. *Apollonius* accused of that sort which was held infamous. 248.

The case of *Nigidius* and *Varro*, who both were engaged in very ridiculous designs. 251, &c,
There

CONTENTS.

There is no reason to think that *Varro* did not believe what he said about the power of Magic. 254.

The Heads of every sect of Philosophers in the *Philopseudes* of *Lucian* believed it in its utmost extent. 255. Some of them thought the disbelief of it an impiety equal to that of Atheism. 256.

The system of Dæmons admirably fitted for the solution of Magical operations. 258. This more particularly maintained by the Platonists. *ibid.* and was upon the whole such a stretch of imagination, that the Poets themselves fell short of it. 261. And none but *Shakespear* could paint up to it. An instance on this occasion from him. 261.

The Heathens under the persuasion of these principles could not possibly have an high opinion of Miracles. 263.

The reputed power of Magic amongst *Christians*. 267. Its prevalence in the 16th Century in *France*. 268. *Catherine de Medicis*, her Court, and her Sons given up to it. *ibid.*

A curious circumstance in the behaviour of *Charles* the 9th. 269.

Christianity charged with Magic by the Heathens. 271. As likewise the Author of it. 274.

The whimsical manner in which *Christ* was accused of learning Magic in *Egypt*. 275. Much the same thing maintained in two blasphemous books on the Birth of *Christ*. *ibid.*

Christ charged farther with writing treatises of Magic, and delivering them to his Disciples. 278.

Even

CONTENTS.

Even the Prodigies of the Crucifixion resolved into Magic. 280. The strange inconsistency of this charge, as produced by *Celsus*, whether it comes from himself, or the *Jew* which is there personated. 280, 281.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the influence which the multiplicity of Gods must have over the conduct of the Heathens.

The doctrine of Dæmons almost universally admitted. p. 283. Yet if it was not, the system of Polytheism was, and the Gods were always ready to supply their place. 285.

Their number was thirty thousand at least, as appears from the testimony of *Hesiod*, *Pindar*, and *Varro*, the last of whom must have taken them only in the lump, without standing to count them, as there must be many more in his time. 281. The consequence of this system in regard to Miracles. 282.

Gods introduced on the most infamous occasions. 289.

The story of *Mundus* and *Paulina*. 290.

As the Gods were supposed to be so familiar with Women, it would not much confirm the reasoning of *Quintus* against his Brother, if he had granted that the Gods might converse with men in their houses. 291. The young Lady in *Ovid* must have had an excellent excuse on this account. 292.

The

CONTENTS.

The behaviour of the *Lycaonians* on occasion of the cure of the Lame man by *Barnabas* and *Paul*, 292.

Their admiration not very extraordinary, though they called them *Jupiter* and *Mercury*. *ibid.* The reasons of this. 293, &c.

A remarkable instance of *Sospittra* from *Eunapius*, who is said by him to be omnipresent, and yet dies in the very next sentence. 296.

The deification of *Demetrius* by the *Athenians*. 297.

They decreed him the Marriage with *Minerva*. 298. Yet as her Statue only was present, he made his Mistress *Lamia* supply her place. 298.

The Deification of many others that were the disgrace of humanity. 300.

The Heathen Philosophers did not believe this system of Polytheism. 303.

The Pagan Religion divided into three sorts, the Fabulous, the Philosophical, and the Civil. 304.

Yet they are by some thought to have but little difference in point of reasonableness. 307.

The Philosophers accused of Atheism by some and acquitted by others. 309. *Plutarch*, Lord *Herbert*, and *Bayle* brought in guilty, 310. but without the least appearance of reason. *ibid.*

A remarkable particular relating to the Atheism of the Stoics. 315.

The Heathen Philosophers fell in with the practice of the People, however they differed from them

in

CONTENTS.

in principle. 316. The Tragedy of Hell, as *Lucian* calls it, was their invention. 318.

The Philosophers by falling in with the common Religion might in process of time possibly have a better opinion of it and believe it. 320. The truth of this illustrated by the worship of images. *ibid.* &c. Besides this, the Philosophers had a Religion in many respects nearly allied to that of the vulgar. 328.

The conduct of *Cassius* praying to the Statue of *Pompey*, just before the Murther of *Cæsar*. 330.

The *Epicureans* might as reasonably comply with the public worship, as other Philosophers. 332. ought not to be singled out as more profane than the rest. 333.

The *Pyrrhonists* much more extravagant in their principles than they, maintained that it was impious to say either that God did take care of human affairs, or did not. 334. and yet were very regular attendants on the public worship. 335.

Epicurus never charged with want of piety to the Gods, amongst all the invectives brought against him. 336.

Some of the *Epicureans* were Priests. 337. to which they had pretty much the same title as the *Stoics*, abating the long beard, and solemn appearance. 338.

The

CONTENTS.

The multiplicity of Gods, in the opinion of some, not admitted by the vulgar. 340. This confuted, and the rise of Idolatry accounted for. 341, &c.

The recapitulation of this argument, and the rest. 346. in which is drawn up the whole force of the Heathen prejudices against miracles. *ibid.* &c.

CHAP. IX.

Of the influence which Idolatry must have over the conduct of the Heathens.

The black and malignant passions indulged by the Heathen Religion. p. 353. Pleasures of all kinds allowed by it. 354. and a composition for sins. 355.

No comparison between the Festivities of the Pagan Religion, and the Severities of the Christian. 356.

The Antient Philosophers themselves charged by the Moderns with encouraging vice. 358.

The Prayers of the Heathens light, empty, and wicked. 360, &c. The best of them for the good things of this world, the other not so much as thought of. *ibid.*

Laverna a fit Goddess for Thieves to worship. 362.

Stiffness of opinion and inveterate habits, another reason against the admission of Christianity. 363.

The confident assertion of *Julian* on this occasion. 365.

Interest another reason against the admission of Christianity. 367. The strong and almost indissoluble power of this threefold bond. 368.

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. X.

A comparison between the situation of the Heathens in regard to the Christian Miracles, and the situation of the Protestants in regard to the Roman Catholic.

The Heathens have several favourable circumstances on this occasion, which the Protestants have not. P. 372.

No comparison between the Legendary Miracles and the Christian, 374. yet the rejection of both, by the Protestants and the Heathens is still alike. *ibid.*

The Heathens quite ignorant of the Christian affairs for a long time. 378.

The extraordinary case of *Numa*. 384.

The general reason of all pretensions to Miracles. 384.

The testimony of *Dionysius* about *Numa*, unsupported by any other of the like nature. 388. Neither *Livy* nor *Plutarch* confirm it, though the magical feast is mentioned by the latter. 389. The *Roman History* of these times very fabulous. 392.

CHAP. XI.

The Conclusion.

Objection to the proof of Miracles as unsuitable to the situation of the Heathen World. 395. The Heathens by no means excuseable, though they were under great prejudices. 397. No other proofs
of

CONTENTS.

of a Divine Revelation than that which has been already made use of, and that of Impressions. 400. and the former is on many accounts the best. *ibid.* Impressions not more suited to the circumstances of the Heathens. 401.

The strange declaration of *Plato* on the subject of *Homer's* inspiration. 402.

No possible objection left against Miracles, but that against the time when they were wrought. 405. and this on many accounts unreasonable. 406, &c.

The conversion of *Constantine* of greater consequence in the propagation of Christianity, than all the rest of its advantages put together. 410, &c.

The only truth which we can have from the consideration of this whole matter about Christ's coming, is the knowledge of our own imperfections, and the necessity of having such a degree of the Sceptical Philosophy, as to make us modest and diffident in our determinations. 418.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Notes are designed as Proofs from the Authority of the Writers which are quoted, and sometimes as Illustrations of the Subjects treated of in the Text, yet the general thread of the Argument is perfect without them.

ERRATA.

Pag. 32. lin. 11. for *jealously* read *jealousy*. P. 88. l. 10. for *Metempsychosis* read *Metempsychosis*. P. 97. l. 25. for *Μεταψυχωσις* read *Μεταψυχωσις*. P. 142. l. 8. dele of. P. 150. l. 7. for *Cæilius* read *Cæcilius*. P. 174. l. 20. for *Mos* read *Mors*. P. 177. l. 20. for *snecum* read *fucum*. P. 192. l. 20. for *Χρησμεα* read *Χρησμεα*. P. 221. l. 28. for *μισανθρωποι* read *μισανθρωποι*. P. 233. l. 26. for *εξισια* read *εξισια*. P. 247. l. 26. for *noverat* read *moverat*. P. 318. l. 5. for *avo* read *avo*. Ibid. for *were* read *was*. P. 321. l. 17. for *innocent* read *as innocent*. P. 325. l. 18. for *these* read *this*. P. 327. l. 5. for *heard* read *hard*. P. 329. l. 2. *επι τ. επι*. l. 4. for *φθαγης* read *φθαγης*. P. 340. l. for *is rescipiscendum* read *rescipiscendum*. P. 343. l. 19. for *whas* read *what*. P. 352. for *an high* read *on high*. P. 238. l. 19. 389, 390. *preem* read *proem*. P. 393. *litteræ* read *literæ*. P. 387. l. 26. for *απ* read *απ*.

Some literal faults and mistakes in the Accents and Punctuation, the candid Reader will of himself correct.

CHAP. I.
Of the Sufficiency of the Christian Miracles to prove the Divinity of the Christian Religion.

THough we have many solid and substantial arguments for the truth of Christianity above all other Systems of Religion that ever yet appeared in the world, yet this of Miracles has always been looked upon to be without exception the greatest and most convincing.

And they are not only more reasonable in themselves, but are apt to strike the minds of men with the greater surprize and veneration, and seem more evidently stamped with the divine authority. — And this not improbably proceeds from the strangeness and rarity of the events: every thing that is done out of the regular course and order of nature generally affecting the sense of Mankind with stronger and more lasting impressions, than that which occurs ordinarily and frequently to their observation.

A

Thus

2 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Thus, for instance, that the Sun should stand still in the midst of heaven is looked upon with much greater wonder and astonishment, than that the same Sun should move from East to West, and cause Summer and Winter: though the latter is as manifest a sign of the good providence of God, and his superintendency of the Creation. But in the latter case we look upon God as it were through a medium and at a distance; in the former as directly before us; visibly interposing his arm, and changing the usual progress and operations of nature.

Even the obstinacy of the *Jews* themselves which in other cases used more plausible pretences, was in this so miserably baffled, that it was forced to account for them by the most absurd and extravagant Hypothesis, that ever was advanced, except that of their own Apostate *Spinoza*. For whereas the *Jews* are so modest as to own at least that they were Miracles, and as such imputed them to the Prince of the Devils; *Spinoza* denies the possibility of them in general; and though what he does in this case is in some sense consistent with himself, yet others are less so, who believing in a God of a different nature from his, can profess that they might
be

Christian Miracles considered. 3

be wrought without any design, and proceed, for ought they know to the contrary, from the prevailing laws of Mechanism, the casual concurrence of matter and motion.

My present design engages me to touch upon these two Hypotheses,

To begin then with *Spinoza*, or rather with those who adopting in some measure his Opinion have defended it upon different principles: — We know not, say these Objectors, the extent of nature's power, nor the sphere of her activity: frequent and numerous have been her productions, which have been altogether prodigious and could never be accounted for by the wisest Philosophers. And as many of them have already appeared, so it is probable there are many yet in embryo, which shall be born hereafter, and be the subject and admiration of future ages.

Such then being the case, continue the Objectors, how can we take upon us to say, Nature *can* do this or *cannot* do that? How can we say that the reputed Miracles of *Christ* are a proof of his Religion, when they are

4 *The Heathen rejection of the*

only a proof of our almost total darkness in the secret springs and workings of Nature?

One parallel instance will for the present be a Sufficient reply: — Suppose then a Person was admiring the beauty and art of some of our antient Monuments and Buildings, and whilst he was extolling the wisdom and stile of the Architects of those times, another should come and tell him, that he might be mistaken in his opinion; that they might be for ought he knew the works of Nature; and that though it was not usual for her to exert herself in productions of that kind, yet since no body knew the limits of her power, such a thing might be brought to pass: I suppose there is no one but in this case would say, that the Man had either lost or abused his reason, and that if ever Nature busied herself in such strange and unusual productions as those he mentioned, it must be in the formation of such whimsical and extravagant disputers. So that the illustration of this argument only illustrates its weakness, and the absurdity of its conclusion confutes its premises.

But farther, granting all that is said to be true, and that Nature might restore the blind, cast out Devils, raise the dead from putrefaction,
and

Christian Miracles considered. 5

and the like; yet how came these things to be done at that particular season, and on that particular occasion? How came the reign of *Tiberius*, and the dispensation of the Gospel to be singled out for these remarkable occurrences? Did Nature fatigue herself so much then, that she is not capable of such productions now? but we see no alteration in her course, no decay in her strength, nor diminution of her capacity.

But lastly, to conclude this head; I suppose all will allow that what was done for some purpose and design, was done by a Being endued with reason, and is the effect of forecast and contrivance.

These Miracles then, as *Christ* and his Apostles confess, were done with a design of establishing Christianity, and introducing into the world a better System both for faith and practice than it had yet been acquainted with; and therefore could not be the effects of Nature; which, as the Objectors themselves observe, does but act at random, and is at least but a blind unthinking principle.

Having now observed as much, as my design will allow, of this Hypothesis; I come to that

6 *The Heathen rejection of the*

of the *Jews* who allow indeed that *Christ* wrought Miracles, but not by the finger of God, that He cast out Devils indeed, but that He cast them out by *Beelzebub* the Chief of the Devils. But to this our Lord returned this satisfactory answer — *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth; if Satan therefore be divided against Satan, how shall his Kingdom stand? **

The business of Christianity was to make Men better and wiser, to deliver them from the slavery of Sin unto the glorious liberty of the sons of God; to make them abandon the lists of *Satan*, and enter into the service of their heavenly King: and if the Devil had contributed with his utmost efforts to the advancement and propagation of these hated Doctrines; He might justly have been accused as *Felo de se*, the only destroyer of his own interest; and subverter of his own dominion.

And in this answer, our Saviour has left us on record a certain and infallible rule whereby we may judge of the validity of Miracles: namely,

* Luke 11. 17, 18.

the

Christian Miracles considered. 7

the reasonableness or excellency of those doctrines, which they are brought to confirm.

So that whenever Miracles are wrought, if ever that can be, to attest a *Talmud*, or a *Koran*, a doctrine absurd or contradictory, advancing confusion in this world, or the interests of *Satan* in the other; derogatory to the honour of God, or inconsistent with his attributes: in all these cases we may be assured that the Seal is counterfeit, and not originally from heaven. And the reason of this is plain, because if Miracles proceed from God, they must confirm a doctrine of the same heavenly nature, entirely free from sin on the one hand, as derived from infinite goodness; and altogether void of absurdity on the other, as derived from infinite wisdom.

But here we ought to take the greatest care lest we judge too rashly, and err even when we have an unerring rule.

As the prejudices against Religion are great, the practice of it hard, and the doctrines of it sometimes above our reason; partial and wicked men may employ this to a wrong purpose; improve the difficulties of Religion into objections,

8 *The Heathen rejection of the*

jections; and *seeming* contradictions into *real* ones; and whilst they rashly act in this manner, put it out of the power of even Miracles to convince them. Some therefore to remedy this evil have carried the matter so high, as absolutely to deny that the truth of Miracles is to be confirmed by the soundness of the doctrine revealed; but that we are to pay a blind and implicit obedience to it, if attested by Miracles, without any examination of, or enquiry into its nature. And this they think deducible from what follows: 1st, because by the same reasons that God is proved to be the Creator of the World, he is proved to govern and preside over it; then 2^{dly}, if He governs and presides over it, how can Evil Spirits interpose and disturb it without his leave and permission? but lastly, how can He who is all goodness give leave to or permit Evil Spirits to deceive and impose on Mankind in a matter of such infinite importance, and with proofs so cogent and convincing?

But what truth soever there may be in this opinion, it can be of no use to maintain it against those I mean chiefly to contend with; who not only agree in it as a fixed and settled principle

Christian Miracles considered. 9

principle, that nothing absurd in a religion confirmed by Miracles can be admitted, as long as we have reason to judge, as well as senses to perceive; but affirm likewise that there are some things relating to Christianity itself, which must always be rejected by the former, however the Miracles are allowed by the latter; that therefore as on the one hand they are convinced that Miracles really were wrought, so on the other hand they are as well convinced that they were wrought in vain: — that the want of Universality, for instance in the Christian Religion — (to say nothing else at present of many of its internal doctrines) is so altogether inconsistent with the unlimited goodness of its supposed Author, that no other marks of his interposition are sufficient to counterbalance it.

This objection though urged in its full extent by a late Author with his usual force and accuracy, may yet be solidly and clearly confuted by the truth only of one observation uniformly and regularly enforced; — which observation is, That there is nothing in this method of Revelation contradictory to the general constitution of things; that though
God

10 *The Heathen rejection of the*

God originally designed the happiness of all his Creatures, yet He did not design that the degree of it should be the same; and that there is not only a visible difference of it in the *several* Species He has created, but likewise in the stations, capacities and circumstances of the *same*; that as from hence no objection is made against the goodness of God in our *formation*; so likewise there is no reason for it from the same circumstances in our *redemption*.

And notwithstanding it be still urged by the same Objector that these cases are unlike, since the different degrees of happiness in the present constitution of things are the most likely to produce universal good; but that in regard to Revelation this does not appear to be the case. To this it may be replied, That there are innumerable instances of want of happiness in some particulars in the ordinary course of things, that seem neither conducive to the good of those particulars nor of the whole:— That lingering and painful diseases, for instance, arising from the air or seasons, and not from any irregularity or imprudence in the virtuous sufferer are not in many cases as far as we can judge productive of any advantage whatsoever.

As

Christian Miracles considered. 11

As therefore we condemn not the general fabric of Nature for some parts of it which seem defective to our limited capacity, but which in reality may be excellencies that we cannot perceive; so likewise we should judge of the Christian Dispensation, nor ought we to condemn it for particularities above our comprehension, when the general purport of it tends to the benefit of Mankind.

There is a passage in the Life of the most celebrated Moral Philosopher of Antiquity, which on this occasion we should do well to remember; who sent back a book, in which, as in Revelation, there were some things hard to be understood, with this modest account of it: That in it there were many things which he could perceive were excellently well said: And though he could not perceive the same of the rest, yet this ought rather to be imputed to want of sagacity in himself than to want of it in the Author; since it was reasonable to imagine that He who wrote so well in *one* part should do the same in *another*.

This is pretty much the case with regard both to Nature and Revelation only with this difference in their favour; that in the former case

12 *The Heathen rejection of the*

case it is possible for weak Mortals to err, or by some accident or design to sink beneath themselves; which never can be the case with God; and therefore when many things appear to us good upon the whole; it would be wrong to impute the rest, of which we see not the use, to want of contrivance, or benevolent designs. And I am much mistaken if this modest and humble turn of mind, when cultivated with the care and attention it deserved, would not be much more efficacious in silencing the scruples both of the *arrogant* Deist, and *fluctuating* Christian, than whole volumes of debates on the Gospel Scheme.

But if all this reasoning likewise should be allowed to be false there is yet little progress made; since the very nature of Revelation itself considered in *other* respects will confute the objection made to it in *this*. For why is it a greater objection, that it is *partially* given, than it is, That it was not given *before*? Why is the *place* found fault with more than the *time*? Why is not the Goodness of God arraigned as much for with-holding the Benefits of Revelation from *former* generations, as not spreading them universally to the *present*?

But

Christian Miracles considered. 13

But if this be reasonable to complain of; That God did not *reveal* himself for instance a thousand years before ; it may likewise with as much reason be complained of; That He did not *create* us a thousand years before; And because this likewise might not satisfy the Creatures *then* existing, 'tis plain there can be no period of time when this complaint might not be made.

But farther; this complaint will be so inseparably joined to any alteration that can be made either as to our Creation or Redemption, that if we suppose, what the adversary we are *confuting*, with so much obstinacy requires, the same reasoning will prevail. For if the Christian Religion had been delivered at one and the same time, and with the same degree of evidence to all the Nations of the world, yet still by reason of our different tempers and capacities, different accidents and turns of education, different length of life and strength of constitution, our improvements in Religion would proportionably vary; and consequently we might have as much cause to find fault with the superiour advantages of our Fellow Creatures on *this* plan, as we had before on the *other*.

But

14 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But farther yet : if Revelation had been made universal it must either have been by the evidence of Miracles wrought at once in every part of the world : or by the immediate Impressions of God on the mind of every Individual : and in either case the same importunate complaint will pursue us still. For the Evidence of Religion either of these ways delivered, necessarily decreasing with time ; men succeeding others thus convinced might still maintain that God had dealt partially with his creatures, and given to their Ancestors greater conviction than to them.

But if to get rid at last of this embarrassing observation our Adversary should still maintain, that future generations ought to have the same light as the preceeding ; He then pleads for a thing which in one of the cases supposed would be pernicious, and in the other impossible. For Miracles wrought at all times and places for the conviction of every Unbeliever would at length be looked upon as no Miracles at all ; and impressions made on the minds of men might convince them indeed in some respects, but leave them open to delusion and imposture in others.

In

Christian Miracles considered. 15

In the former case, a Miracle actually wrought would be less efficacious than the testimony of one wrought many ages before; and in the latter *such Opinions* (as we have learnt by experience) would prevail, as would introduce into the world the greatest disorder and confusion.

But if notwithstanding all this it should still be pertinaciously maintained, that this last is a method neither pernicious nor unreasonable, though the former it is certain could be of no efficacy or use; this indeed is driving a Deist to the most extreme despair; 'tis making him have recourse to reasons which in his prosperous state he always esteemed chimerical, and constantly made the subject of his contempt and ridicule.

But that nothing however may be wanting to confute his arguments in whatever shape they appear; these impressions then, we answer, must be either demonstrative, or probable, or dubious:— If they are dubious, they would be of no use at all; if they are only probable, they would frequently be the means of endless confusions; and if they are demonstrative, we are but mechanical in our faith, and there can
be

16 *The Heathen rejection of the*

be no virtue in believing; or if this was thought no objection to them, yet there is no reason for a Deist to expect demonstration in revealed Religion, when a much less degree of proof is thought by himself sufficient in the natural.

The first and last of these cases then will certainly be rejected by both Deist and Christian; but of the second, it will still perhaps be said, that it is altogether sufficient, and that nothing but a probability in regard to these impressions is desired. But if this be the case, why is any objection made? why is not Christianity already probable as well by the testimony of Miracles, as it would be by the force of impressions? and why is not one sort of probability as good as another?

But if this be not the case; if some sorts of evidence are *more* proper than others of the same degree; then certainly the degree of evidence arising from impressions must be the last that we should choose. — For probable things from the accidents of our lives, the passions and infirmities of our nature, and many other causes of the like kind frequently *have* been, and frequently *must* be rejected: and

Christian Miracles considered. 17

and though this rejection in truths of another nature is attended with a few bad consequences, yet in Religious ones it is quite otherwise; and a dispute not about Christianity itself, but only about some unimportant parts of it, has been the means of as great and lasting calamities as History can afford.

But all this inconvenience would be heightened and aggravated by the probability of impressions; for in that case there would be an heat and stubbornness in the minds of men that no reasoning could remove: there would be an impatience of contradiction, and a fury of temper inconsistent with the quiet and repose of men: in short there would be a spirit of persecution against the opposers of their opinions, which no laws could conquer, no affections could soften, and no fears controul.

The various and complicated scenes of misery which owe their birth to the persuasion of these *spiritual* impressions, and which might serve for proof of the observation just made, I had rather the Reader should remember than I repeat; let it suffice therefore in general to observe that fatal experience has

B

more

18 *The Heathen rejection of the*

more than once convinced us, that no one is led to such extremities of guilt, as he who is *firmly perswaded* that that guilt is holy.

Upon the whole therefore we may observe, that the want of Universality is a circumstance in our Religion, which though we cannot see the reason of, yet we cannot object to: and though there are but few particulars of a like nature in Christianity, which is a system excellently well accommodated to the weak faculties of Men; yet if there were more, we could have no reason to complain of them, since a thousand may be admitted as well as one.

And from hence we see in its full light the absurdity of that objection, which the Deists make to us, that Miracles cannot prove a false doctrine to be true; — We never pretended they could, and require them for no such purpose: but they can prove those things which are above our capacities to be true and good, which we could not tell to be true and good without them, because they testify the Credibility of the Revealer.

Pretty

Christian Miracles considered. 15

Pretty much the same reply is to be given to another objection much of the same nature; which of late has been very impertinently urged: That Miracles have no connexion with the doctrine, but were only wrought to alarm the senses, and raise the attention of Mankind:

For on what accounts, and to what ends is this attention to be raised? on no other account but for the sake of raising it? But what Deist can maintain this? How can he consistently with his principles suppose the Deity to act so absurdly, and to be at such a *waste* of miraculous operations in vain?

If therefore the attention is to be raised for some end, What is this end? Is it an impious or destructive one? This would be worse than none; and therefore no Deist can suppose either that God would do it *himself*, or allow the liberty of doing it to *others*:

What will he say then? That if the attention is to be raised, it must be raised to something suitable to the dignity of the occasion, and the dignity of the Author? This is the sum of the evidence we contend for;

20 *The Heathen rejection &c.*

and is in effect the only refuge the Infidel himself can find.

Strange power of Truth! that can thus force men against their wills to the acknowledgment of its doctrines, and make the very mazes and perplexities of error end only at last in its establishment and confirmation.

Thus we have seen from the nature and end of the Christian Miracles, that they are altogether worthy of their divine Original, which is one circumstance which we shall find the Heathen Miracles were defective in: the other circumstance, which these latter want, and the former have, is that proper degree of evidence, which we shall consider in the next Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

*Of the Evidence of the Christian
Miracles.*

THERE being various sorts of truth in the world, and of consequence various degrees of Credibility, it can only be expected that each truth should have the degrees of credibility that belong to it : and as the relation of the Christian Miracles is only an historical fact, it can only be expected that it should have just such a portion of probability as other historical facts have.

And this is indeed the case ; all the reason we have for believing the truth of any part of antient History, of the *Carthaginian* for instance or *Peloponesian* Wars, the same we have for the belief of the performance of *Christ's* Miracles : for do we believe the *one* upon the credit of impartial Historians of those wars, as *Thucydides* and *Livy* ? so must we do the *other* on the credit of impartial Historians of those affairs, as *Saint Matthew* and *Saint John*. Were

22 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Thucydides and *Livy* such honest Men that they allow no suspicion of their joining in falsehood, and a design to impose on succeeding ages? Much more so were the Saints and Apostles.— Were *Thucydides* and *Livy* again so well acquainted with the matter of fact, that as they had no mind to deceive others, so they could not be imposed on themselves? Certainly so were the Saints and Apostles, as being eye-witnesses to the transactions.

If we add to all this, that the Apostles were simple and illiterate Men, that they had not cunning enough to frame an imposture of this nature; or if they had, that they were most of them well known in *Judæa*; that the time and place of these Miracles might easily have been enquired into; that they could have no views of honour, profit or pleasure; but that ignominy, sufferings, and death were the effect of their preaching; these surely will amount to such a proof of the matter, as the hardiest Sceptic can scarce possibly dissent from.

But it will be said here, perhaps, that all this is not so plain as we would make it; and that the Apostles do not seem to be men of no genius

and contrivance; and though they could not expect much encouragement from either the *Jewish* or the *Roman* People; yet they had still very great and important designs; that they intended, what they did in reality effect, to settle a standing Ministry in the Church, place themselves at the head of it by the consent of a bigotted and Superstitious Party, and then largely partake of its honours and rewards.

But they that argue thus are not aware that they destroy their own objection, and mention one amongst the many proofs we have for the truth of that Religion they would detract from; for the wiser *Jew* mentioned in the *Acts* could have told them, that if it had not been of God, it would have come to nought; and therefore the wonderful progress it made in the world, the settling a standing Ministry in the Church, and the honours and rewards its professors partook of, are no proofs of its being a *cunningly devised Fable*, invented; cultivated and finished by speculative and designing men; but rather sure and infallible marks of the Divine inspiration, blessing, and favour, which so visibly cherished and supported it during its infant state, so widely propagated it

24 *The Heathen rejection of the*

in its growth, and so firmly fixed and established it in its maturity and perfection,

If it be objected still, that this progress can be no proof of its inspiration, because *Mahometanism*, a religion absurd and ridiculous, has made a greater progress in a shorter time: this can be no parallel; because that was propagated by fire, sword and persecution: whereas Christianity prevailed in the world by more gentle and easy means; it only *forced* the assent by the Miracles, which attended its progress; and *won* it by the goodness inherent in its composition,

I need not say after this, that the objection is false in fact, that the Apostles were so far from aiming at riches and grandeur, that they constantly rejected them; and if any had ever reason to complain of the miseries of life, these were the men: Which shews farther, that there could be no pleasure expected from their joining in this imposture.

They received nothing from an ungrateful world for their doctrine and advice but scornful scoffs and barbarous invectives; nothing for
freeing

Christian Miracles considered. 25

freeing them from the error of their ways but torments and persecutions of every kind.

But to this perhaps it will still be said, that the event itself is not so much to be considered, as the reasonable hopes which the Apostles might entertain; that in the former the most prudent and deliberate men are often mistaken, and therefore it is no wonder that the Apostles were so too; but that if they had only *respect* to temporal good, the accusation will still be just. — But however, supposing likewise that they could have no reasonable hopes of this; yet it will be objected, that there is still a *possibility* of imposture, because first in regard to reputation; if they could *get* none, they had however none to *lose*; and in regard to riches, the same: and it must certainly be looked upon as a competent acquisition of both by men of their low fortunes and education, to be esteemed as Oracles by their followers, and have all things laid at their feet.

That farther; as to danger of life it could only be amongst the *Jews*, since the *Gentiles* admitted all Gods, and had so little knowledge of, or regard to the Christians, that they were
per-

26 *The Heathen rejection of the*

permitted to live amongst them like the *Jews*; under which name we find them more than once comprehended by the *Roman* Historians of those times.

Now to this objection it may be replied, 1st. That though the Apostles were not placed amongst the great ones of the earth, and consequently could not be deprived of magnificent titles and popular applause; yet still they had the most solid and valuable reputation, that of good men to lose: and then in regard to riches, though collections certainly were made, and at their disposal; yet they neither had these in view at first, nor often made use of them afterwards; And Saint *Paul* in more places than one assures us, that he still lived by his labour and was burdensome to none^a.

As to what is said about Persecution, it did indeed begin amongst the *Jews*, but was carried on amongst the *Gentiles*; and notwithstanding the confessed intercommunity of Gods, yet the preaching against them all was injurious enough, and sufficient to bring on them

^a 1 Cor. 9. 14. 2 Cor. 11. 7, 12, &c. *Acts* 20. 34.

Christian Miracles considered. 27

them that heavy degree of vengeance, which they afterwards felt in all the Nations of the world^b.

So that men may pretend what they please of the desperate condition of the Apostles, and maintain that they had no hopes, but from public revolutions; yet certainly on a supposition that they were carrying on an imposture, they had reason to expect (what Saint Paul in a like case declares) that they should be of all men most miserable.

In short, the prospect around them, on this supposition, must be so uniformly dark, that they could expect no support or comfort from themselves or others; from heaven above, or hell beneath; they could expect no satisfaction from *themselves*, when their conscience was continually upbraiding them with their treachery and falshood; nor from *others* who were so entirely averse both to their Persons and Opinions: They could hope for no assistance from *God*, when they were witnesses to a lye, and abusing his Name; nor from the *Devil* the

^b 1 *Thess.* II. 14. 2 *Cor.* I.

28 *The Heathen rejection of the*

the Master of deceit ; because though they were like him in this respect, yet their doctrine was so entirely destructive of his interests and designs.

I know but of one *possible* objection, that, after all this, the *wit of man* can invent against the Testimony of the Apostles ; which is, that they were Enthusiasts and Madmen, that they had no views of honour, profit, or pleasure, but acted *at random*, subscribed unknowingly to a falshood, and died for a Religion, which had no other subsistence than in their own whimsical heads and disordered imaginations.

To this Objection we shall make large concessions, allow (what to some may seem impossible) that such things have been done ; and that even under the light of the Gospel ; nay even in this enlightened part of the Globe, the Island in which we dwell, in some late times of confusion men of this stamp and character have appeared: who have even died at the stake for impious and fanatical notions, and thought they did God service in breathing out Murther and Rebellion to the last,

But

Christian Miracles considered. 29

But the case of these men and the Apostles is vastly different; *these* embraced and adhered to a regular and uniform system; *those* a collection of false and unreasonable tenets: the *one* party pursued the design proposed with the properest methods, constancy, prudence, and moderation; the *other* with caprice, ill-conduct and fury: the doctrine and scheme of the *one* has always been followed by the most reasonable part of mankind, and been looked on in all ages, if not of divine, yet at least as the wisest of human institutions; that of the *other* has been constantly laughed at, exploded, and condemned as absolutely inconsistent with the dictates of reason, and the order of Society.

In short, there is as real and manifest a difference between the case of the Apostles, and the Men we have been speaking of, as there is between sense and folly, between virtue and vice, between a sober and regular way of thinking, and mad starts of passion. And except a prudent and well-guided choice of the wisest system of Religion, and a just and reasonable perseverance in the same; except the taking the best means to introduce and establish

36 *The Heathen rejection of the*

bliss this Religion in the world; and confirming the truth of it by Miracles and Prophecies, by right reasoning and shining examples; in short, except good sense, good meaning, and good conduct be looked upon as the marks and properties of Enthusiasm, the Apostles are entirely free from any suspicion of this nature.

But to all this we have still the testimony of Christians in all ages of the world, as well as their bitterest and most virulent Opposers the Pagan Writers.

These latter indeed do but seldom make mention of the Miracles of our Saviour, not not only because they for the most part disbelieved or disregarded them (which peculiarity in them will be at large considered hereafter) but because they were seldom led to it by the nature of the subject or occasion; which for the present may be a sufficient answer to those men who decry the Mission of Christ as a fable or imposture, upon no other account than that his Miracles are rarely mentioned by impartial Historians, and men of different opinions; but chiefly insisted on by those whom they look

Christian Miracles considered. 31

look upon to be so greatly in his interest, and so visibly inclined to favour and encourage his pretensions.

Indeed there is one difficulty which even upon this plan may appear of some considerable weight; which is this, *Josephus*, a *Jewish* Historian, in his History of the *Jewish* affairs makes no mention of *Christ*, nor his Miracles; and it is somewhat odd, say the Deists, that such an Author as *Josephus* should in a Book written on purpose to deliver the transactions of *Judaea*, thus negligently execute his design, and strangely omit the most extraordinary occurrences of all Antiquity.

But supposing that the celebrated passage in *Josephus* relating to *Christ* is spurious, which yet has not been sufficiently proved; *Josephus* being a man much in favour with the *Roman* Nation, and *Vespasian* having no dislike to the title of Messiah, he would not rashly venture to forfeit his esteem and reputation with them by dwelling and enlarging on a subject so disagreeable to their inclinations, and so opposite to their Religion. Accordingly we find that in his History of the *Jewish Wars* he takes occasion

32. *The Heathen rejection of the*

casion more than once to flatter this Emperour, and apply the celebrated Prophecy then prevailing in the world to his Person and Reign : and * it is not unreasonably conjectured that both *Suetonius* and *Tacitus* have copied him in this respect, and maintained that *Vespasian* and *Titus* were those, that coming from *Judæa* should have the possession of the World.

And indeed there seems to be great reason for his silence in this particular, if we consider that the jealousy of the *Romans* about it was so great, that even *Vespasian* himself, one of the wisest and most courageous of their Emperours, could not free himself from the disturbance it created, till he had caused the whole offspring of *David* to be cut off : and though *Josephus* wrote his *Archæologia* in *Domitian's* Reign, yet as this fame was again renewed, the same reason for his silence continued. †

And this consideration had no doubt a very powerful influence upon several other celebrated Historians : Pomp and Riches have a most surprizing tendency to *turn the head*, and corrupt

* *Daubuz.* pro testimon. *Joseph.*

† *Daubuz.* *ibid.* *Euseb.* *Hist. Eccles.* L. 3.

rupt the heart: — Truth laid in the balance against *Roman Honours* might seem light and insignificant, and transactions might lose their scandal or reputation according as the Writer's Patron either praised or condemned them.

If after all this it be said, that the Testimony of the Apostles is indeed perfect and good, and that the Silence of the Pagan Historians is no more than what might be expected; but still that it would have been much more satisfaction, if not only the truth of these Miracles had been fully and indisputably confirmed by the common consent of all the Historians in those ages of the World; but that fresh Miracles were still in these latter times performed for the conviction of *this* or *that* particular Unbeliever: to this it may be replied; That there is no end of the satisfaction which Men of such various and whimsical tempers require: — The *Jews* saw the greatest Miracles performed daily and hourly amongst them, but they did not think these sufficient for their belief, except *Christ* came down from the Cross; and for the very same reason, if He had come down from the Cross, there would have been one scruple left, to take away which, He must have ascended into Heaven.

34 *The Heathen rejection of the*

So that as it is no objection against the Truth of Christianity, that *Christ* did not descend from the Cross to satisfy the stubborn *Jew*; so it can be no objection against the truth of Miracles, that fresh ones do not still continue to be wrought to satisfy the stubborn *Infidel*.

When once there is enough to turn the Scale on the side of truth, whatever else is put in is altogether unnecessary; it is but humouring a vitiated judgement, and a vain curiosity: for to such an height will men's prejudices carry them, that if *once* they deny probability, they are in danger of denying demonstration; if *once they refuse to hearken to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*

And indeed this must for the most part necessarily happen in the conduct of men; for if they *will* entertain groundless suspicions, there is no reason why they should not proceed to absolute denials: — Scepticism is the natural and genuine Parent of utter Infidelity: and if a man will not allow one truth to be probable, he may as consistently not allow another to be certain: if, for instance, because of the follies and

Christian Miracles considered. 35

and impostures of some Historians, he should deny that there was such a Person as *Alexander*, he might for the very same reason deny that there was such a Person as *Elizabeth*; and because common fame may err as well as History, this prejudice a little encreased may make him deny that at *present* we have a Prince on the throne; and if he advances one step farther, he would disbelieve his senses. So strangely do men blunder, and even lose their reason, when once they begin to pervert and abuse it; and such prodigious and unaccountable creatures as well in common life, as religion, must the Caviller and Sceptic appear.

Instead therefore of the vain enquiry into the reasons why God did not afford us a *clearer* light, we ought rather to admit and make the best use of *this*; and Deists, instead of complaining of the *great* Objections to, and Difficulties of Christianity, ought rather to be thankful that they are no *greater*.

Those Objections are weak and insignificant which do not subvert the Truth of the Fact; and that light can never be said to be *glimmering* or *insufficient*, which if rightly and duly observed will lead us to heaven.

36 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Our Religion, we confess, is but a probable System, nor could it well be any other; it boasts of no infallible Proof, or absolute Demonstration; nor, if it did, could there be any merit in believing it. — It is possible that Miracles might be the effect of Nature or the Devil; and Prophecies of Forgery or Conjecture: — that the wonderful Progress of Christianity might be owing to the constancy and courage of its Patrons, or to some favourable juncture of affairs at that time of the world: — That the excellency of its composition might not have God for its Author, but men of concealed learning and deep penetration: — That even the important article of the Resurrection, the basis and foundation of the whole scheme of Christianity, might only be the last and most refined invention of politic heads to give a sanction to their precepts, and finish their system: — All these particulars, I say, are *possible*, but not one of them is *probable*; not one of them has the least degree or even air of Credibility.

CHAP.



CHAP. III.

*Of the low opinion which the Heathens
had of Miracles.*

I Have now shewn in such a manner as was proposed, that Miracles when wrought are on certain occasions a sufficient Testimony of the Inspiration of their Author ; and likewise that such Miracles were *really* wrought in the Reign of *Tiberius*, and for the propagation of Christianity ; I come now to the consideration of the main design ; which is the *strong presumption* against this proof of Revealed Religion in general, arising from the principles and conduct of the Heathens, who in fact we see could resist the strong light of the Gospel, and slightly pass over the most remarkable occurrences that any History had produced.

As Human Nature is the same in all Ages and Countries, and, excepting some refinements

38 *The Heathen rejection of the*

and corruptions of Education, must be influenced in the same manner; it is plain that this proof of Miracles must be either defective in its Nature, or else that there must be something *extremely singular* in the situation and circumstances of the Heathen World.

This singularity, which in reality is the case, and which in treating on this subject has not met with the consideration it ^a deserved, I shall now endeavour to account for; after having first laid it down as the basis of this work; That a Disregard of Miracles in general was not put on by them to serve some particular purposes, but was really a principle that influenced their
ac-

^a *Minutius Felix* and after him *Saint Cyprian* seem willing to account for this, though their manner of accounting for it is really more strange than the fact itself; since the whole of what they say amounts in effect to no more than that the world was *bewitched*.

“ Ipse Saturnus, et Serapis, et Jupiter, et quicquid
“ Dæmonum colitis, victi dolore, quod sunt, eloquuntur;
“ nec utique in turpitudinem sui, nonnullis præsertim
“ vestrum assistentibus, mentiuntur. Iphis testibus esse
“ eos Dæmonas de se verum confitentibus credite: Ad-
“ jurati enim per Deum verum et solum, inviti, miseri,
“ cor-

Christian Miracles considered. 39

actions on the most interesting and important occasions.

And for a proof of this, one would think, no other observation need be made, than that of their great contempt of the Miracles of *Christ*; not only at the time of his appearance, when wise men would stand on their guard against the surprize, which such strange and unusual things are apt to occasion; but likewise after they had coolly and deliberately examined the whole History of his Life, and tenour of his Actions.

But if it be admitted, that no time was sufficient to cool the passions, and conquer the
pre-

“ corporibus inhærescunt; et vel exiliunt statim, vel
“ evanescunt gradatim, prout fides patientis adjuvat,
“ aut gratia curantis aspirat. Sic Christianos de proximo
“ fugitant, quos longe in cætibus per vos laceſcebant.
“ Ideo inserti mentibus imperitorum odium nostri serunt
“ occulte per timorem. Naturale est enim et odisse quem
“ times, et quem metueris infestare, si possis. Sic occu-
“ pant animos, et obstruunt pectora, ut ante nos incipiant,
“ homines odisse, quam nosse: ne cognitos aut imitari pos-
“ sint, aut damnare non possint.” *Minut. Fel. Octav.*
Cyprian. de Idolor. Vanitat.

40 *The Heathen rejection of the*

prejudices of men in their condition; yet if they had been brought up with any veneration for Miracles at all, they could not certainly have abused those of our Saviour so much; and the ^b *little Tricks of Jesus*, which *Eusebius* informs us they called them, was, in this case, an appellation too mean and contemptible for men in their senses to give.

But let us impute this to Prejudice also; let us allow that the spirit and heat of opposition might make them act against the strongest light, and most powerful means of conviction; yet in other cases, where this opposition could not probably have so great force, we see the same turn of mind, the same indifference prevail.

Pilate did not seem to fall in with the prejudices of the *Jews*, nor to be heated with their rancour and opposition to *Christ*; nay he was rather convinced of the innocence of his life,

^b Εἴπερ ἡμεῖς μὲν τὸν τοιαῦτα πεποιηκότα ὃ Θεὸν ἀλλὰ
Θεοῖς κεχαρισμένου ἀνδρα ἡγάμεθα, οἱ δὲ δι' ὀλίγας τερα-
τείας τινὰς τὸν Ἰησοῦ Θεὸν ἀναγορεύουσι.

Euseb. cont. Hieroc. Cap. 2.

Christian Miracles considered. 41

life, and at his death washed his hands before the whole assembly to shew that he had no share in the murder of a Person, in whom it is left on record, that he found no fault at all:^c but then how amazingly absurd and inconsistent must be his conduct on any other supposition than that which we are considering; to own indeed publicly that he found no *fault* in him, and yet to acknowledge no *virtue*; to be convinced from the nature of his doctrine and his actions, that he had no designs of a kingdom on *Earth*, and yet not to discover from the multitude of his Miracles that his kingdom was in *Heaven*!

The ^d Acts of *Pilate* did indeed suppose him to have a more favourable opinion of Miracles; but for that very reason these acts are suspected: but however that be, it is better to take our account of *Pilate's* conduct from the unerring authority of Scripture than from the precarious one of them; especially as this example will
be

^c *Matt.* 26.

^d What credit and authority these Acts have is much disputed; that there were some sent to *Rome* is probable, as it ^e was the custom so to do; but what they contained
is

^e *Ensch. Hist. L. 2. c. 2.*

42 *The Heathen rejection of the*

be found so consistent with the many that will be produced.

With the same indifference then with which *one* Heathen Governour treated the pretensions of Christ, we afterwards find that *another* treated the pretensions of the Apostles; and yet with these the spirit and power of their Master must be supposed to reside; and we know likewise from their History that they were not at all deficient in the most extraordinary operations.

Even the very shadow of *Peter* had most singular effects; and when *Paul*, as the Scriptures inform us, was pressed in the Spirit to preach

is not easy for us to discover; since many were forged on both sides, by the ^bChristians heightening the reputation of of their Master, by the ^cHeathens lessening it, so as to put them into the hands of their children, to make them blaspheme Christ.

Justin Martyr and *Tertullian* are the two principal Persons that insist on them; the last of which says that *Tiberius* from these acts desired the Senate to admit *Christ* into the number of their Gods; which story ^d*Faber* en-

^b *Addison* on the Christian Religion.

^c *Pearsoni* Læction. in *Act. Apost.* Lect. 4. *Euseb.* Hist. L. 9.

^d *Fab.* Epist. &c. L. 2.

Christian Miracles considered. 43

preach the doctrine of *Christ* in *Achaia*, where it is not to be supposed that God would leave him destitute of such miraculous powers, as would further the propagation of the Gospel; * and when in consequence of this he had made some Converts in the place, and the *Jews* accused him to the Governor; the Governour utterly disregarded the accusation, and thought that neither the *Jewish*, nor *Christian* pretensions could concern him at all: nay, when afterwards *Sosthenes* the chief Ruler of the Synagogue was beat, and the assembly was in danger of growing disorderly and tumultuous; yet He looked upon the whole with uniform neglect, and in the language of Scripture *cared for none of these things*.

But

endeavours to confute at large. *Tertullian* in the same Apology says, that *Pilate* was in his heart a Christian; and indeed if he was not, the various things said by him to have been related in these Acts in favour of *Christ*, will bear hard upon *Tertullian's* testimony in this matter.

* *Acts* 18. St. *Paul* was reckoned so eminent for these miraculous powers amongst the Heathens, that *Julian* singles him out as the greatest Magician that ever existed.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν πάντας πανταχῶς τῆς πῶποτε γοήτας καὶ ἀπατεῶνας ὑπερβαλλόμενον Παῦλον.

Julian. apud *Cyrill.* cont. *Julian.* L. 3.

44 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But still it may said, that this cause was Christian, against which though they were not angry, yet they must have various prejudices:— Well then; in the lives of their own Philosophers they could have no passion of this kind to seduce them; and yet their *Miracles* have no stress laid on them at all; neither *Aristeas* nor *Pythagoras* gained their credit in the world on this account:— the latter especially was not much more esteemed for his thigh of *Gold* than one of *Flesh*: and it was not his being seen in ² two distant places at once, that gave such a splendour to his name, as his being placed so high in venerable Antiquity, together with the remarkable austerity of his life, and singularity of his opinions. Though indeed notwithstanding all this, he is not yet more eminent than some Philosophers, who had neither the advantages of his age, the reputation of his manners, nor pretension to his wonders.

Neither

¹ *Aristeas* is three times mentioned by *Strabo*; in two of which he is said only to be the Author of the *Arimaspean Verses*, and the Master of *Homer*; in the third, which is here quoted, to be the Author of these Verses, and a great Magician: so that the Worker of Miracles we see is made inferior to the Poet. *Maximus Tyrius* uses him in much the same manner, excepting that he seems to *encrease* his Philosophy, and *diminish* his Wonders.

Strab.

Christian Miracles considered. 45

Neither is it to be wondered at that the admirers of this Philosopher should lay so little stress on his Miracles, if we consider to what light and insignificant purposes they were wrought : infomuch that though, according to *Jamblichus*, he had the admirable gift of conversing with the Brute creation ; yet the principal use he made of it was to whisper his grand secret into an Oxe's ear, and bid him *abstain from beans*.^h

It was but reasonable that *Jamblichus*, who recorded unreal Miracles of *Pythagoras*, should have the same recorded of himself ; this was but a piece of civility which could not be very extraordinary in a Scholar of his own ; when he had paid it to one so many ages before him : accordingly we are informed by the writer of his life, that *Ædesius* saw him conjure up two boys from the fountains of *Gadara*,

Strab. L. 1. L. 13. L. 14. *Max. Tyr.* Dissert. 16. 38.

Edit. Mark. *Herodot.* L. 4. *Plin.* Nat. Hist. L. 7. c. 52.

Ἐντεῦθεν ἐξ-ἰν' Ἀριστείας Ὁ ποιητὴς τῶν Ἀριμασπίων καλυμένων ἐπῶν, ἀνὴρ γόνος ἢ τις ἄλλος.

^g Metapontum et *Tauromenium* in *Italy* and *Sicily*, *Porphyr.* de vit. *Pyth.* p. 18.

^h *Jamblich.* vit. *Pythag.* *Porphyr.* ibid. p. 17. *Edit. Holst.*

ⁱ *Eunapius* de vit. *Philosophorum* in *Jamblich.*

46 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Gadara, not only to the surprise of the Spectators, but even to that of his Disciples, who had less reason for it, as they had seen something done by him of a ^k like nature before. He speaks indeed slightly both of this Miracle of *Jamblichus*, and some others that he had mentioned, which peculiarity in him will be considered hereafter : at present I would observe, that Philosophers are not the only Persons of Antiquity to whom Miracles are ascribed and disregarded ; when *Suetonius* informs us of the two wonderful Cures performed on the blind and lame man by *Vespasian*, who came to him on the warning the God *Serapis* had given them in a vision ; his observation on this remarkable occasion is,¹ that since this thing happened

^k *Eunap. ibid.*

¹ “ Ac statim advenire litteræ, fusas apud Cremonam
“ Vitellii copias, ipsum in urbe interemptum nuntian-
“ tes. Auctoritas, et quasi majestas quædam, ut scilicet
“ inopinato et adhuc novo principi deerat, hæc quoque
“ accessit. *Sueton. in Vespasian. c. 7.*

Then follow the Miracles ; but we shall see hereafter that they might be the occasion of bestowing on men the appellation even of a God, and yet be looked upon as no extraordinary things.

^m *Suetonius* adds, that this was done instinctu Vaticinantium ; as if Miracles alone were not sufficient on this occasion,

Christian Miracles considered. 47

pened to *Vespasian* on the very day that the news came to him of the Defeat of *Vitellius*, it might be a good Omen of his success, and add some weight to his proceedings. And as it were for fear that we should mistake him in regard to the dignity these Miracles might add to his character, he immediately subjoins what he takes to be of the same import;^m that some very antient vessels were dug up at that time in *Tegæa*, in which was represented the true image of that Emperour.

There is something very much like this recorded by *Spartianus* in the Life of *Adrian*, and much in the same careless and indifferent mannerⁿ: the relation itself is quoted in the margin:

occasion, and that prophecy likewise must be joined to them to support an upstart Emperour, who yet had almost all other princely virtues to endear him to his People.

“ Per idem tempus Tegææ in Arcadiâ instinctu vaticinantium effossa sunt sacro loco vasa operis antiqui, atque in iis affimilis Vespasiani imago. *Sueton*, *ibid*.

“ Ea tempestate supervenit quædam Mulier quæ diceret somnio se monitam, ut insinuaret Adriano, ne se occideret, quod esset bene valiturus; quod cum non fecisset, esse cæcatam: jussam tamen iterum Adriano eadem diceret, atque genua ejus oscularetur; receptura visum si id fecisset: quod cum in somnium impleisset, ocu-
“ los

48 *The Heathen rejection of the*

margin : the sum of it is, that a Woman was told in *one dream* that if she kissed the knees of *Adrian* she should receive her sight, which she had lost for not telling him what she had been commanded to do in *another dream* ; and on making the experiment she *recovered* her eyes, as miraculously as she *lost* them.

And a Man also, who was born blind, was not only restored himself by touching *Adrian*, but was the means also of freeing the Emperor from his fever ; although, says the Historian, some were of opinion that these things were done by ° Magic : which is just as difficult

“ los recepit, quam aquâ quæ in fano erat, ex quo venerat, oculos abluisset. Venit et de Parmonia quidam natus cæcus ad febrientem Adrianum, eumque contigit ; quo factò, et ipse oculos recepit, et Adrianum febris reliquit : quamvis Marius Maximus hæc per simulationem facta commemoret.” *Spartian. vit. Adrian.*

° That this is the meaning of *simulatio* appears from *Dio*, who says thus ; Ἀδριανὸς δὲ μαγγανείαις μὲν τισὶ καὶ γοητείαις ἐκενέτο ποτὲ τῷ ὕγρῳ, πάλιν δ' αὐτῷ διὰ τακτικῆς ἐπίμπλοιο. But *Salmasius* thinks this was an invention of *Antoninus* to persuade *Adrian* not to kill himself, and that so *simulatio* should be understood : the only objection I have to this is, that as *Spartianus* says that the fever left *Adrian* on the *Lame Man's* touch, He supposes that it was more than a trick. However what the Historian supposes is one thing, the real event another ; such no doubt as we have represented it.

Christian Miracles considered. 49

cult a way of conceiving them to be done, as any other: the truth is, one easily perceives that they were done *no way*; and it would have been scarce worth the while to have mentioned these Miracles reported of *Adrian*, except it had been to make use of them as a Comment on those reported of *Vespasian*; they both of them have the same aspect and appearance, and both of them were probably invented for much the same end: the one to add some credit to *Vespasian*, the other to add some hopes to *Adrian* ^P.

The Historian *Ammianus Marcellinus* cannot be passed over on this occasion, who, notwithstanding

^P *Serces*, who has taken some pains to confute the Miracles of *Vespasian*, has given us an instance how far flattery might go in this case; which I shall mention rather for the singular baseness of the *French* People, the singular vanity of their Monarch, and the singular folly and servility of their most liberal men, than that it is at all wanted on the present occasion.

The words are those of an ^{*} *Academician* on the day of his reception, and are as follow: "*Lewis* said, Let *Straßbourg* submit, and *Straßbourg* submitted: Power more than human, and which cannot be compared but to that which in creating the world, said, *Let there*

D

^{*} *Mr. Daucourt* le. 19. *Novembre* 1683.

50 *The Heathen rejection of the*

standing that he seems acquainted with the religious disputes of the Christians, and knew probably what his Master *Julian* intended, in endeavouring to erect another Temple at *Jerusalem* in spite of the Prophecies against any future erection, does yet not seem at all affected by the extraordinary Miracle on this great occasion; but informs us with wonderful coolness

“be light, and there was light.” † On which occasion *Serces* thus rationally observes, “Si, au milieu de la brillante lumiere que l’Evangile a repandu dans les Esprits, on a pu attribuer a des foibles mortels la Toute Puissance, qui paroît dans la maniere d’agir de l’être infiniment parfait; qui seroit surpris que dans un Pais ou le Prince des Tenebres regnoit avec une auctorité despotique, on ait suppose a un Général d’Armée des actions, que l’on croyoit pouvoir être produites par un simple Homme, aidé de quelque intelligence supérieure? *Serces traite sur les Miracles*, art. 5.”

A difference indeed of occasions might be objected to this reasoning of *Serces*, and some allowances should be made on account of the nature of Rhetorical harangues; but there can be no possible excuse found for so abject and impious a compliment.

† “Louis a dit que *Strasbourg* se soumette, et *Strasbourg* s’est soumis: Puissance plus qui humaine, et qui ne peut être comparée qu’à celle, qui en creant le monde a dit, *Que la lumière soit faite, et la lumière fut fait.* Recueil des Harangues prononcées par M. M. de l’Acad. Franc. dans leurs receptions. pag. 388. Edit. de Paris l’an 1698. in 4to.

Christian Miracles considered. 51

ness and tranquillity, that frequent irruption of balls of fire hindered the progress of the work.

And that this could not possibly be owing to natural causes, and so be neglected by *Marcellinus*, we learn from the uniform consent of Christian Writers; who all assure us, that

Hur-

“ Christianam religionem absolutam et simplicem
“ anili superstitione confundens (*Constantius*) in qua
“ scrutanda perplexius quam componenda gravius exci-
“ tavit dissidia plurima, quæ progressa fufius aluit con-
“ certatione verborum, &c. *Amm. Marcell. L. 21.*

As *Constantius* was an *Arian*, this contest of words is supposed to relate to the terms of *Homoousios*, and *Homoiousios*: the first signifying of the same substance, the second of the like substance.

“ Quum itaque rei fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque
“ Provincie Rector, metuendi globi flammæ prope
“ fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere lo-
“ cum, exustis aliquoties operantibus, inaccessum: hoc
“ modo, elemento destinatus repellente, cessavit incep-
“ tum. *Amm. Marc. L. 23.*

“ *Theodoret. Eccles. Hist. L. 3. c. 20. Sozomen. Socrat. Hist. L. 5. Ruffin. Hist. L. 1. ad finem. Nazianz. Orat. cont. Jul. 4. Chrysostom. in Psalm. 110.*

These two last Authors are very particular about this Miracle; the former takes notice of it in a great many places, (See *Chrysost.* in *Psalm. 110.* λογ. εις Βαβυλ. 2. demonst. cont. Jud. & Gentil. Sect. 16. Orat. 5. in *Judeos*

52 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Hurricanes and Earthquakes were added to the Fire; and that the cloaths of Christians as well as the *Jews* were impressed with the figure of a Cross, which remained many years after the event.

If the indifference of *Marcellinus* is not owing to the cause we are considering, there is something in it extremely unaccountable; we may see in the books quoted below^t what was the opinion of the Fathers in regard to the abovementioned Prophecies, which they looked upon as an express declaration of God against the power of men to rebuild the Temple at *Jerusalem*; and that opinion was so prevalent, that we find *S^t. Cyril*^u (who was Bishop of *Jerusalem* at the time of this undertaking) encouraging the Christians with strong assurances of the vanity of the attempt: and when the Jews exulted on the
seem-

&c.) and the latter appeals to the Cross on the People's cloaths as remaining in his time.

Ἐπειδεξάτωσαν ἔτι καὶ νῦν τὰς ἰδῆτας οἱ τοῦ θαύματος
ἐκείνου θεαταὶ καὶ μύσται, τὰς τότε καλοσημανθείδαι τοῖς τοῦ
σταυροῦ σήμασιν. *Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 4. adv. Julian.*

^t *Ruffin. L. 1. ad finem. Theod. L. 3. Chrysost. Orat. 5. in Jud.*

^u *Ruffin. ibid. Theod. ibid.*

Christian Miracles considered. 53

seemingly prosperous condition of their affairs; when they began to renew their antient pretensions to Empire, and threatned the whole body of the Christians with utter extirpation; he assured his Brethren that these menaces were vain, that the prophecies of *Christ* were certain, and never could fail; and since he had assured the world that another Temple should never be rebuilt, they might calmly rest in that stedfast and effectual promise.

As from hence it appears that this opinion prevailed much in the world; and as *Julian* himself had not only been a Professor of the Christian Religion, but had likewise been a Reader in the Church; * he could not in all probability be ignorant of this; and his Historian likewise, from what we have mentioned of him before, seems to be as little liable to this charge: if therefore they knew that the work was undertaken in contradiction to these

Pro-

* *Socrat. L. 3. c. 1. Sozom. L. 5. c. 2. Nazian. in vect. 1.*

† *Marcellinus* indeed imputes this undertaking to another principle; * but if ever the authority of the Christian Writers is to be preferred to his, it must be here.

* “Imperii sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare, ambitiosum quoddam apud Hierosolymam Templum, &c. *Armm, Marcell. L. 23.*

54 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Prophecies, in this case the Miracle ought to have had a stronger influence on them both; if they did not, yet it deserved some esteem with any that could esteem Miracles at all; especially since the other circumstances added by the Christian Writers would naturally put them in mind of the interposition of Heaven in favour of a Religion, that was then struggling for its establishment in the world.

But it may not be so proper to insist on such authorities as these, though much more probable than they are; an Historian, who is obliged to relate such events as he is not at liberty to confute, can only inform us by his cold and negligent manner of relation what is his own opinion about them: I proceed therefore to some more express testimonies of the Heathens in relation to this head.

The opinion, which *Celsus* had of Miracles in general, is plain from that remarkable reply, wherein he endeavours to insult over the declaration of our Saviour, that false Christs, and false Prophets should come and perform many wonderful works, insomuch that if it was possible they should *deceive the very elect*. On which

Christian Miracles considered. 55

which declaration he thus cries out: "O powerful force of light and truth! Christ himself confesses that some should come with like signs and wonders which were the works of Satan, and not of God; from whence he detects the arts both of himself and others; from whence it must be impossible to think that *He* could be God, and *others* Impostors for the same works."

But *Celsus*, it will be said, was an Epicurean, and as such could believe neither Prophecy nor Miracles: yet *Democritus*,^a who was in some measure

² Ὡς φως καὶ ἀλήθεια, τῇ αὐτῇ φωνῇ διαρρήδην ἐξαγορεύει, καθὰ καὶ ὑμεῖς συγγεγράφατε. διότι παρίσονται ὑμῖν καὶ ἕτεροι δυνάμεσιν ὁμοίαις χρῶμενοι, κακοὶ καὶ γοῆτες. ὡς ὕδὲ αὐτὸς ἔχαρνος ἐστίν, ὡς ταυτὰ γὰρ ὕδεν δεῖον, ἀλλὰ πονηρῶν ἐστὶν ἔργα. βιάζομενός δ' ὑπὸ τῆς ἀληθείας ὁμῶς, καὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπεικάλυψε, καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτὸν ἠλεγξε. *8cc. Origen. cont. Cels. L. 2.*

^a Plurimis locis gravis Auctor Democritus præsentionem rerum futurarum comprobatur. *Cicer. de Divinat. L. 1.*

Epicurus, indeed, refined a great deal from *Democritus* in many things, particularly in that he altogether decried Divination; yet in some things which we call Miracles, he was not quite so obstinate, especially in regard to Spectres and Apparitions.

Diogen. Laert. in vit. Epicur. Ciceró de Nat. Deor. L. 2. Bayle, Dict. Histor. et Critique voce Lucreté,

56 *The Heathen rejection of the*

measure the founder of his Sect, could approve one of them; and *Celsus* in this book could object both.

‘What^b occasion, says he, is there to enumerate those various sorts of Oracles, and Prodigies? those many divine appearances, and admonitions; those many extraordinary cures and extraordinary deaths; in short those many wonderful events which have happened both to communities and individuals, and of which civil life is full?

How sincerely or how consistently he did this we need take no great pains to shew; ^c because in all probability he did neither: *Origen* has on many occasions complained of this disingenuous conduct, and it is no where more conspicuous than on this: the Miracles of *Christ* he openly disavows, and those of the Heathens he in all probability only occasionally maintains, to oppose them, as he thought, to the like pretensions, and confront imposture with imposture.

The

^b Τὶ δεῖ καταλέγειν ὅσα ἐκ χρηστηρίων, &c.

Origin. cont. Cels. L. 8.

^c Ἐλεγκτέον δὴ ὡς τὰ ἐναντία ἑαυτῷ λέγοντα τὸν Κέλσον, εὐρίσκεται μὲν γὰρ ἐξ τῶν ἄλλων συγγραμμάτων Ἐπικύρειος ὧν. ἐνταῦθαδε, &c. *Orig. cont. Cells. L. 1.*

Christian Miracles considered. 57

The testimony of *Julian* is much of the same nature, who yet agreed with *Celsus* in scarce any thing else but opposition to our faith; who was by his ^a principles as much an enemy to *Epicurus* as he was to *Christ*; who professed an extraordinary belief both in the Heathen Gods and their Miracles; ^c who even in his last moments owned the power of Prophecy; ^e and who was in short so abandoned to his Country Superstition, that, as his own Historian assures us, if he had come home safe from the *Parthian Expedition*, there would scarce have been Oxen enough to serve him for sacrifice. ^g Yet see how this man speaks of Miracles; “ *Jesus* (says he) never did any thing memorable in his life, unless any one can think “ that the curing of the blind and lame, and “ casting

^a *Greg. Nazianzen. Orat. 3. In Julian. Theodoret. Hist. Eccles. L. 3. Ammian. Marcellin. L. 25. Julian. Orat. 6. adversus inperitos canes,*

^c Ἐμὲ γὰρ ἰάσατο πολλάκις Ἀσκληπιὸς κάμνοντα, ὑπαγορεύσας φάρμακα, καὶ τέτων μάρτυς ἐστὶν ὁ Ζεὺς.

Julian apud Cyrill. cont. Julian. L. 7.

^e Nec fateri pudebit, interiturum me ferro dudum didici, fide fatidica præcinente. *Amm. Marcell. L. 25.*

^g Superstitiosus magis quam sacrorum legitimus observator, innumeras sine parsimonia pecudes mactans &c. *Id. ibid.*

58 *The Heathen rejection of the*

“ casting out Devils in the villages of *Bethsaida*
“ and *Bethany* were considerable actions.”^h

It cannot be said that his prejudices to the Miracles of *Christ* make him speak thus, since he manifestly reflects on Miracles in general; however there is little occasion to insist on this, because the enemies of *Christ* and the sect of *Epicureans* were not singular in this respect; the *Aristotelians* likewise were of the same opinion in regard to all the Miracles which belonged to Heathenism; though *Origen* is very piously enclined to think, that, if they had seen those of *Moses* and *Christ*, they would have in all probability changed their sentiments: yet we shall see hereafter (what he himself might have seen) how hard this was to be done.

But this opinion was not yet confined to the followers of *Epicurus* or *Aristotle*; since more of the Philosophers amongst the Heathens had them

^h Ἐργασάμενος (Ἰησοῦς) παρ' ὃν ἔζη χρόνον ἔργον ἔδεν
ἐκκοῆς ἄξιον, εἰ μὴ τις οἶεται τὰς κυλλὰς καὶ τυφλὰς ἰά-
σασθαι, καὶ δαιμονῶντας ἐφορκίζειν ἐν Βηθσαιδᾷ καὶ ἐν
Βηθανίᾳ ταῖς κόμαις, τῶν μεγίστων ἔργων εἶναι.

Julian. apud Cyrill. cont. Julian. L. 6.

ⁱ Τὶ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μὲν ἡμέτερα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὃ λέγει
Κέλσος ἀναπλάσματα μυθικὰ; οἷς ὁ Ἑλλήνων φιλόσοφος
αἰρέσεις

Christian Miracles considered. 59

them in little esteem, as the same *Origen* seems to intimate in the place quoted above: however if any one sect from the nature and tendency of their principles ought more readily to have admitted them than the rest, it must be that of the *Platonists*; and yet we shall see, in what *Hierocles* says of *Appollonius*, what a mean opinion he had of them *himself*, and must suppose the *rest of the world* to have too. He had purposely set up this great Impostor of Heathenism in opposition to *Christ*, and having mentioned some of his Hero's extraordinary actions, he then immediately subjoins, “ but to what end do I mention these
“ things? for what, but to shew the solid judge-
“ ment of the Heathens and the extreme levity
“ of the Christians? since they are so simple as
“ to acknowledge Christ to *be God* on account
“ of a few slight and insignificant Tricks,
“ while *we* only call *Appollonius* a *Friend of the*
“ *Gods* for his great and substantial Miracles.”

It
αἱρέσεις πεπιστεύασιν, ὡς περ ἡ Δημόκριτος καὶ ἡ Εὐκλείδης,
καὶ ἡ Ἀριστοτέλης, τάχα ἂν πεπιστευκῆναι διὰ τῶν ἐνεργειῶν
τοῖς ἡμετέροις &c. *Origen. cont. Cels. L. 8.*

* Τίνος ἂν ἕνεκα τῶν ἐμνήσθην; ἵνα ἐξῇ συγκρίνειν τῇ
ἡμετέραν ἀκριβῆ καὶ βεβαίαν ἐφ' ἑκάστῳ Κρίσιν, καὶ τὴν τῶν
Χριστιανῶν κυφότητα. εἰπερ ἡμεῖς μὲν, &c.

Euseb. in Hierol. cap. 2.

60 *The Heathen rejection of the*

It would not be easy to find any where a more illustrious instance than this of the truth of what we are at present contending for, *i.e.* of the very different opinion which Christians and Heathens entertained of the weight and efficacy of miraculous operations; since the most stupendous sort of them could, it seems, raise a Person no higher in the esteem of the latter than to be called a Friend of the Gods; and what a slender commendation this was, will be seen more at large hereafter:¹ Whereas those of a much lower class, as *Hierocles* thinks, could make a man be thought God by the latter: and how infinitely superiour in every godlike perfection a Deity of the Christians must be to any amongst the Heathens, I suppose the present age need not be informed.

But as it were for fear that this passage should be interpreted in a manner that he did not intend; *Hierocles* farther assures us in the same place, that, though this Philosopher had even from the time of his *Childhood* performed many wonderful works, it was not his design to enumerate them *all*; but that omitting much
the

¹ Chap. 8.

Christian Miracles considered. 61

the greater part of them he should only refresh his Reader's memory with *some*.^m

From whence he seems to conclude, that the plain necessity of mentioning his Miracles at all was only to confront the pretensions of the *Christians*; and that the Heathens, to whom he wrote, being satisfied with a specimen only of the wonders which they did not consider as important things, would look in general for the superiority of these two Rivals in the *still* circumstances of their lives, and *unalar*ming tenour of their doctrines.

The sentiments of the *Egyptian* Gymnosophists, as recorded in this very History of *Apol*lonius, are exactly of a piece with this; who, in a conversation which they had with this Philosopher, ridicule all the wonders which he pretended were done in *India*: and though, by the specimen ⁿ which they gave him, they were

^m "Ὁς ἐκ παιδὸς κομιδῇ νέε, καὶ ἀφ' ὑπερ ἐν Ἀιγαίῃ τῆς κελίας ἱεράσατο τῷ φιλανθρώπῳ Ἀσκληπιῷ, πολλὰ καὶ θαυμαστὰ διεπράξατο, ὥν τὰ πλείω παρεῖς, ὅμην ποιήσομαι μνήμην, *Euseb. cont. Hierocl. L. 2.*

ⁿ "Ὅτι δ' ἐκ ἀδυνατῶμεν σοφίζεσθαι &c. *Philost. L. 6. c. 10.*

This specimen was making an Elm speak at their command.

62 *The Heathen rejection of the*

were able to do the same, yet they did not reckon these considerable enough to engage a wise man's attention; ° that truth had no occasion for the pomp of Miracles and magical operations; that *Apollo* himself gave an illustrious instance of his contempt of wonders, who when he was able to stop the river *Cephissus*, and shake the whole mountains of *Parnassus*, yet he was content to deliver his Oracles in the simplest manner, and without any ostentation or shew.

There is something very remarkable in the answer of *Apollonius* in the next chapter, which though it is intended to confute what *Thebesion* advanced (and what he had advanced about the Oracles was not altogether true) yet he gives ^p no other proof of *Apollo's* esteem for Miracles, than his declaration that he knew all things; and in regard to the other particulars he has left them untouched.

But

° Θαυμασιουργίας δὲ καὶ βιαίης τέχνης μὴ δεῖσθαι ἀληθείαν. σκέψαι γὰρ τὸν Ἀπόλλων εἶπε, τὸν Δελφικόν, ὃς ὑδὲν τερατευσάμενος λέγει ὅποσα οἶδε: καὶ τὸ ράδιόν τε ἢ αὐτῷ σεῖσθαι μὲν τὸν παρυσίου ἐστ. Id. ibid.

^p *Philostrat. Lib. 6. cap. 11.*

Christian Miracles considered. 63

But the truth is, *Thespesion* and *Apollonius* did in this case agree, as appears manifestly from the conduct and behaviour of the latter; who, though he speaks so magnificently of the learning and virtue of the *Brachmans* as even to rank them with the Gods,^a yet their Miracles, he says, he quite overlooked, as not thinking it worth his while to make any enquiry into their nature.

It was but reasonable that a man who despised the Miracles of others so much should have his own despised in his turn; and this was in reality the case with *Apollonius*; who coming into *Greece* just after his miraculous escape from *Rome*, and being now in the last stage of a whole life of wonders, the conflux of the people about him was prodigious; but this conflux, we are informed, was owing not to his Miracles, but his Doctrine: and when many

^a Id. Lib. 7. cap. 32. Τὴς Ἰνδῶν ἐγὼ μόνος αὐθαίρων
θεὸς τ' ἡγέμαι, καὶ ἀξίως τῆς ἐπωνυμίας ταύτης.

^b Εἰδὼν δὲ παρὰ τοῖς Ἰνδοῖς τὴν τριτάδαν, καὶ τὴν
δινοχόον, ἣν ὅπως σοφίζονται αὐτὰ ἤρετο, ἐτ' ἐκεῖθεν
μαθεῖν. Id. L. 5. c. 12.

^c Οἱ μὲν εὐχρηστονότες &c. *Philastrat.* L. 8. c. 15.

64 *The Heathen rejection of the*

many from *Rome* related the wonderful works which he had done, he was almost adored, says the Historian, by the multitude; but then he immediately adds, that it was chiefly on account of his singular meekness and humility.

What we find here to be true of the different sects of Philosophers and the bulk of Mankind, is true likewise of another set of Men who had more reason to make profession of a different Doctrine: the men I mean are those Lawgivers and Sages of Antiquity, who pretended to the assistance of divine inspiration: and yet even these did not endeavour to back their pretensions with Miracles: neither *Amasis* nor *Mnevis*, nor *Zoroaster*, nor *Zamolxis*, nor *Minos*, nor *Rhadamanthus*, nor *Triptolemus*, nor *Zaleucus*, nor *Lycaon*, nor *Lycurgus*, nor *Romulus*, nor ^u *Numa*, nor any of the large catalogue of Lawgivers in former times ever tried to

ἰ Διέχειτο μὲν ἡ Ἑλλὰς ἔσπερ' ὅτ' αὐτὸν προσκυνεῖν αὐτὸν, Θεῖον ἡγούμενοι ἄνδρα, δι' αὐτὸ μάλιστα, τὸ μὴ εἰς κόμπου μηδένα ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν καθίσταται. Id. Ibid.

^u *Numa* indeed differed a little from these, and has some strange * things recorded of him which will be considered hereafter.

* *Dionys. Halicar. L. 2. Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 5. initio. Plut. in Num. Liv. Hist. L. 1.*

Christian Miracles considered. 65

to rival each other in this; and they only seemed solicitous who should have the fairest claim of conversing with the Gods, and deriving their Doctrine from heaven.

It is not improbable that these examples were copied by some modern Impostors, and that the influence of this opinion so extended itself to posterity, that even some nations, who acknowledged in part the power and doctrine of *Christ*, did not yet think Miracles any ways necessary to Religion.

This however at least we are assured of, that no inconsiderable part of the world readily acquiesced in a Religion that made no pretences to them at all; and that the Author and Propagator of this Religion has left it on record in his holy book that he was sent only to^{*} preach the word of God, and that Miracles could be of no use, since, if they were really wrought, Infidels would impute them to Magic.^y

It

^{*} “ Ils ont dit, Nous ne croitons pas au Prophete;
“ si nous ne voyons paroître quelque miracle; Dis leur;
“ je ne suis envoyé que pour prêcher la parole de Dieu.
L'Alcoran translate d'Arabe par Du Ryer, c. 13.

^y “ La Lune s'est partagée en deux, néanmoins les
“ infidels ne croient pas les miracles quand ils les
E voyent,

66 *The Heathen rejection of the*

It may seem odd that any of the Fathers of the Church should retain such a *strong tincture* of this evil principle, as to join their testimony with their most virulent Opposers: yet this in all probability was the case with many of them: *Jerom* in his Comment on the 81st Psalm, where he had but little occasion to mention his opinion, assures us that the performance of Miracles was no extraordinary thing; and that it was no more than what *Apollonius*, and *Apuleius*, and innumerable Impostors had done before.*

The declaration of *Lactantius* is indeed extremely surprizing, who saw so little force in the Miracles of *Christ*, exclusive of the Prophecies relating to them, that he is not ashamed to own their utter inability to support our Religion by *themselves*; and that on this supposition he could easily have joined both the
Heathens

“ voyent, ils disent que c'est la magie; ils mentent, et
“ ne suivent que leur passion; mais tout est écrit.

Du Ryer, *ibid.* Chapitre de la Lune.

* Non est grande facere signa; nam fecere signa in Egypto magi contra Mosem, fecit et Apollonius, fecit et Apuleius; infiniti signa fecerunt. *Hieronym.* in *Psalm.* 81.

Christian Miracles considered. 67

Heathens and the *Jews* in their absurd accusation of *Christ* as a Magician.^a

Tertullian, on occasion of these words of *Christ* before taken notice of by *Celsus*, says much the same thing *himself*, and supposes even our *Saviour* to be of the same opinion: “*Christ*,
“ says he, foretelling that many Impostors
“ should come and perform many wonders,
“ shews that our faith cannot without great
“ temerity be founded on Miracles; since they
“ were so easily wrought by false Christians
“ themselves.^b

A modern Authour not being aware of this principle amongst the Heathens, and of consequence not making the necessary allowances for the

^a Fecit (Christus) mirabilia; Magum putassemus, ut et vos nuncupatis, et Judæi tum putaverunt; si non illa ipsa facturum Christum, Prophetæ omnes uno ore prædicassent. *Lactant. div. Inst. L. 5. c. 3.*

^b At ego negabo solum hanc illi (Christo) speciem (virtutum) ad testimonium competisse, quam et ipse postmodum exauctoravit. Siquidem edicens multos venturos et signa facturos, aversionem etiam Electorum, nec tamen admittendos; temerariam plane signorum et virtutum fidem ostendit, ut apud Pseudo-Christianos facillimarum, *Tertull. in Marc. L. 2. S. 3.*

68 *The Heathen rejection of the*

the prejudice and habits of men newly called
 ' to the marvellous light of the Gospel, and
just awaking from the lethargy of Superstition,
 has made some harsh reflections on this testi-
 mony of *Tertullian*, and bore hard on the
 authority of this venerable Father; * which
 from his great candour and moderation I am
 perswaded he would not have done, if he had
 considered the matter as he ought.

But this is not the only place in *Tertullian*
 where this opinion is maintained; in his book
de

* This was the case of most of the primitive Fathers
 in general, * and *Lactantius* † and *Tertullian* ‡ in par-
 ticular.

* I' ose dire que la remarque de ce Pere n' est pas moins
 temeraire qu' il pretend que le seroit la foi d' une Personne
 qui se fonderoit sur des prodiges bien averez. — Par la il
 renverse entierement cette grande preuve de l' Evangile,
 et en general de toute revelation extraordinaire et divine.
 D' ailleurs ce qui l' engage a soutenir qu' une foi ap-
 puiée sur des miracles n' est pas une foi solide et raison-
 able, c' est que des Imposteurs en peuvent faire des veri-
 tables; ce dont il croit trouver une preuve dans le passage
 que

* *Dupin. Biblioth. des Auteurs Ecclef. Tom. 1, 2, 3.*

† *Id. Tom. 1.*

‡ *Pamel. vit. Tertull. Tertull. de Pallio.*

Christian Miracles considered. 69

de Præscriptione Hæreticorum ^f he makes much the same reply to the opposers he had *there* to confute, as he had done before to *Marcion*; and asserts, even beyond *Lactantius*, that though it was true, that the Heretical doctrines were supported not only by Miracles but Prophecies too; yet it all signified little, as it was in effect no more than what the Scriptures themselves had foretold.

Saint *Austin* is more guarded on this head, as might reasonably be expected from the nature

of
que nous examinons. * Mais avant de prononcer d'une maniere si decisive, il auroit dû examiner si les prodiges que devoient operer les faux Prophetes estoient des vrais miracles. — Pour s'en assurer il n'avoit qu'à comparer comme nous avons fait la prediction avec l'evenement; il seroit entré dans la pensée de Jesus Christ, et ne l'auroit pas fait raisonner d'une maniere contraire a ses principes, et a ses idées. *Serces traité sur les Miracles*, Art. 5.

^f Adjicient præterea multa de auctoritate cujusque Doctoris Hæretici, illos maxime doctrinæ suæ fidem confirmasse, mortuos suscitasse, debiles reformasse, futura significasse, ut merito Apostoli crederentur. Quasi nec hoc scriptum sit, venturos multos, qui etiam virtutes maximas ederent, ad fallaciam muniendam corruptæ prædicationis. *Tertull. de præscrip. Hæret* c. 44.

* *Matt.* 24. v. 24.

70 *The Heathen rejection of the*

of his Education, and the many excellent lessons on Christianity which he had received from the best of Parents; yet there seems to be something of the old leaven in the following passage:^h — “ You work no Miracles, says he to *Faustus* “ and his adherents; but if you did, we know “ what to do with them; and our Lord has “ sufficiently instructed us how to behave on “ this occasion in that passage where he says “ that *false Prophets shall arise, &c.* ^h

I know that *some* of these declarations of the Fathers may receive a different interpretation; but I know likewise how hard that interpretation is to support: though, if it was not, it would signify but little, as our evidence is still increasing; and is in the next place confirmed by even divine authority: — the authority I mean is that of Saint *Paul*, which may be here very properly added, not indeed as saying the same

^b *Dupin, Biblioth. des Auteurs Eccles. Tom. 3.*
Bayle, Dict. Hist. et Critique voce August.

^h *Scripturas tanta auctoritate firmatas commendatasque respuitis; miracula non facitis; quanquam si faceretis, ipsa in vobis caveremus, præstruente nos Domino, et dicente exurgent multi Pseudo-Christi, et Pseudo-Prophetæ, et facient signa et prodigia multa, ut fallant, si fieri*

Christian Miracles considered. 71

same thing with a *Laëtantius* or *Tertullian*; for who can expect that? who can look for a contempt of Miracles from a *Christian*, much less from a *Father*, least of all from an *Apostle*?

But though he does not indeed, as may reasonably be thought, despise Miracles *himself*, yet he plainly shews that the Heathens did; or at least he most manifestly alludes to this conduct in *part* of them in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*; *The Jews*, says he, *require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom*:¹ *i.e.* The *Jews*, who had been used to real Miracles and therefore were sensible of their importance, expected that every Religion should be confirmed by them; the *Greeks*, on the contrary, who had so frequently been imposed upon on this head, neglected the proof of Religion which might arise from thence, and chiefly regarded the excellency of the doctrine.

And

fieri potest, etiam Electos. Ecce prædixi vobis.

August. cont. Faust. L. 13. c. 5.

The difference between these two last mentioned Authors, and that no inconsiderable one, is, that *Tertullian* admitted the most extraordinary Miracles (*maximas virtutes* as he calls them) on trifling or impious occasions; *Saint Austin* did not.

¹ *1 Corinth. I. v. 13.*

72 *The Heathen rejection of the*

And agreeably to these opinions did the good providence of God accomodate our Religion; which though it had not such refined and subtle disquisitions as to satisfy every Caviller on the *one side*, nor such ^k peculiar and amazing signs as to satisfy every Caviller on *the other*; yet it had in effect every thing given to it which was proper to comprehend them *both*; the profoundest Doctrines to *allure the Greek*, the most extraordinary Miracles to *alarm the Jew*.

And yet, as if the whole world had *conspired* together in this single point, as if men of the most *various*, and even *opposite* principles, were by a *secret sympathy* reconciled on this occasion, and had made the most firm and inflexible parts of their faith bend to the admission of this general absurdity; hear how some of the most eminent *Jews* express themselves about it;

“The

^k *Matt.* 12. 28. *Id.* chap. 16. 1. *Mark.* 8. 11. In these places the stubborn opposers of the Gospel amongst the *Jews* not believing in the Miracles already done require new ones; and for much the same reason the Cross of Christ was foolishness to the stubborn Gentiles, which if they had rightly considered would have conveyed to them such a depth of wisdom as they could not have resisted.

Christian Miracles considered. 73

“ The *Israelites* did not believe in *Moses* our Master (says *Maimonides*) for the Miracles which he wrought;”^a And the reason of this, he afterwards assures us, was because it might be suspected that all Miracles might be owing to Magic,^b — This, we see, is the old reason very impertinently urged, and in all probability *Maimonides* thought so too; for thus he goes on in order to strengthen the weak side of it: “ If necessity moved *Moses* to work Miracles, what has his Religion to do with them? it was necessary that the *Egyptians* should be drowned, and therefore the *Red-Sea* was divided; the *Israelites* wanted food, and therefore Manna was sent; they were thirsty, and *Moses* opened a Rock; the Congregation of *Corah* denied him, and therefore the Earth swallowed them up.”^c

Another

^a *Maimon. de Fund. Leg. c. 8.* משה רבני לא האמינו בו ישראל מפני האותות

^b Id. *ibid.*

^c Id. *ibid.* And yet this *Maimonides*, who has delivered himself thus, is the man of whom the *Jews* have given the following Character, *a Mose antiquo ad Mosem nostrum non surrexit Major Mose*: * but surely this second *Moses* has

* *Patin, Lettres Tom. 3. Bayle, Dict. Hist. et Critique Art. Daillé.*

74 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Another of their Doctors, whom they call the *Divine Philosopher*,^d says much the same thing; "that *Elisba's* raising the Child to life, "and curing *Naaman's* Leprosy; that *Daniel's* "escaping the Lions, and *Jonah's* out of the "Whale's belly, might all be effected by the "influence of Stars, or Pythonism"? *

And besides these, the whole body of the *Jews* are shewn in another part of this work^f to lay so little stress on the most extraordinary Miracles, as argues them to be very inconsistent Disciples of *Moses*, who had built his Religion upon them.^g

But I would not lay too great a weight on the authority of the *Jews*, because it neither properly belongs to the present case, nor can it be very uncharitable to think that their declaration on this occasion is not altogether sincere: if the

Reader

has here paid a very ill compliment to the *first*, and is here at least in point of reasoning much inferior to his Master.

^d *Stillingfleet's Origines Sacrae*. L. 5. c. 6.

^e *Albo*. L. 1. c. 11.

^f Chap. 7.

^g *Numbers* 16. 28, 29.

Christian Miracles considered. 75

Reader however should look upon this as too harsh a censure (as I am not inclined at present to examine this point) ^a *Stillingfleet* and *Vorstius* must be answerable for it, who both assert on this occasion, that the *Jews* act thus that they may derogate all they can from the Miracles of our Saviour.

There needs nothing, surely, after such a cloud of witnesses to confirm this point; if there does, it may yet be observed, that though Religion and all its appendages, amongst which were Miracles, was (as shall be more insisted on hereafter) accounted with the Heathens a sacred thing; yet its best and most prudent friends could not forbear, on some occasions, to express their dislike of this weak and contemptible part of it. This dislike being well founded in its nature, and communicated by degrees to different Persons, it reached at last the remotest corners of Paganism; and θαύματα μωροῖς, or Miracles for fools, was an expression too

^a *Stillingfleet*, ubi supra. The following is the reason quoted by him from *Vorstius*:

Nihil non nugacissimi mortalium fingunt, ne cogantur agnoscere virtute ac digito quasi ipsius Dei Jesum nostrum effecisse miracula sua,

76 *The Heathen rejection of the*

too common in the mouth of the Heathens to make us doubt any longer of the truth of the fact we are maintaining^m.

I have now done with this head, and am not aware that any reasonable exceptions can be

■ From hence therefore we see, that it was not for nothing that *Origen* was very tender of mentioning to the Heathens many Miracles performed in the early times of Christianity; and that he had abundant reason to conclude as he does, that though he saw them himself, yet he should forbear to urge them, as it would only afford an occasion of making Infidels merry.

Χλευάση δε Χέλσος το λεχθησήμενον &c. Πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ τοιαῦτα ἱστορήσαμεν. ἅτινα εἰὰν γράφωμεν, αὐτοὶ αὐτοῖς παρατυχόντες καὶ ἰδόντες γέλῳτα πλατύν ὀφλήσομεν τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ὁιομένοις ἡμᾶς ὁμοίως οἷς ὑπολαμβάνουσι, ταῦτ' ἐναπεπλακέναι, καὶ αὐτὰς πλάσσειν.

Origen. cont. Cels. L. i.

I do not know whether the great Poet of the age had copied the abovementioned remarkable phrase γέλῳτα πλατύν in the following line,

*The broadest mirth unfeeling folly wears. **

But many, I doubt not, will agree that the latter part of of the Verse belongs to the Infidels of *Origen*, as well as the former; and that their *broad mirth* on this occasion could scarce be unattended with *unfeeling folly*.

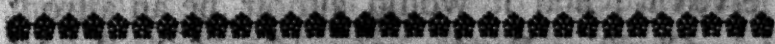
* *Pope's Essay on Man.*

be made to the testimonies which have been brought to confirm it ; but if any one should think otherwise, and maintain that something else is necessary for the establishment of so singular an opinion, he will be gratified in his expectations as we go along ; and will find the principles and practices of much the greater part of the Heathens on this point strengthening and confirming each other : I beg leave however in this place to remind the Reader, that he must not be surprized to find here and there a scattered sentiment in the Heathen Writings, that may seem to imply the contrary to what has been advanced : There is scarce any opinion at all, though ever so generally acknowledged, that has not been controverted by some ; and the Antients in particular are less cautious than the Moderns in regard to this point ; since they not only were split into several sects that contradicted *each other*, but likewise frequently contradicted *themselves* : different doctrines on different occasions was a principle that universally belonged to Antiquity ; and besides, their Writings being often imperfect, and delivered down to us with a *casual* or *intended* obscurity, will sometimes occasion an appearance of contra-

78 *The Heathen rejection of the*

tradition, when in reality there is none : in all researches therefore into the sentiments of Antiquity, we must only, like one sect of it, aspire unto the *probable* ; and this *probable* must always be founded on the more general consent.

CHAP.



CHAP. IV.

Of the Vanity of the Heathen Pretensions to Miracles.

I Come now in order to account for the above-mentioned conduct of the Heathens, from such circumstances and principles as might very reasonably produce it. And the very first thing that naturally occurs on this subject is the great probability, that, notwithstanding the various pretensions to Miracles, yet none were ever really wrought.

And on this head there will be no occasion to go back to remote Antiquity, and consider at large the Boasts of the *Wonder-workers* of old; not only because ^a *Hierocles* himself has slightly passed over the Miracles of *Aristeas* and

^a Ἐπὶ καὶ τέτοις τὸν προκονησίου Ἀριστεῖαν καὶ Πυθαγόραν, καὶ αὐτὸν ἀρχαιοτέρως παρελθόν, ἐπιφέρει λόγων, δευ:
Euseb. cont. Hierocl. L. 2.

80 *The Heathen rejection of the*

and *Pythagoras*, but because they really deserved it; and it would almost be an affront to a Christian Reader to confute seriously the *Reviviscences* of the one, or the swearing of the *Daunian Bear* by the other.

My present design however obliges me to touch upon them: and that I may not be tedious, I shall omit the long account of ^b *Herodotus*, where the affair of *Aristeas* is mentioned at large; and content myself with what ^c *Suidas* relates of him in short, which is, that his Soul went out of him, and returned to him at pleasure.

I take it for granted that the sagacious Reader wants nothing to confirm him in the belief of so reasonable and significant a wonder; if he does, he may receive it from the Comment of *Pliny*, ^d who says, that his Soul performed this extraordinary operation in the shape of a Crow: with this Comment therefore

^b *Herodot. Melpom.*

^c Φασὶ τὴν ψυχὴν, ὅταν ἐβέλετο, ἐξίέναι, καὶ ἐπανιέναι πάλιν. *Suidas. in Aristeas.*

^d *Aristeæ etiam visam evolantem ex ore in Proconneso, Corvi effigie. Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 7. c. 52.*

Christian Miracles considered. 81

fore I shall leave it to his consideration, and proceed to the Miracles of *Pythagoras*.

Of these we have already mentioned his Golden Thigh, his appearance in two places at once, and his conversing with an Ox; and the last mentioned of the *Daunian* Bear is pretty much of the same nature, which he bound with an oath, *That she should eat no more animal food*: and if we add to these, the Salutation of him by the River *Caucasus*, the Eagle which he called down at the Olympic Games, and his contract with the Fishermen, that if he foretold the exact number of Fish, which they took at a draught, they should put them again into the water; which He did, and preserved likewise the lives of them upon the land; the rest of what is reported by him may be reckoned amongst his Predictions; which, according to *Porphyrus*, were as extraordinary as his Miracles: and I take it for granted that the Reader will find no difficulty in acknowledging the truth of his declaration.

But

* Προφῆσεις τὴ γὰρ ἀπαράβατοι σιδήρων διαμνημονεύονται αὐτῷ, καὶ λοιμῶν ἀποτροπαί: σὺν ταχὺ δέ.

Porphyr. de vit. Pythag.

82 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But here I suppose that I shall be forced from my proposed method of defence; and it will be said by some, that an empty compliment to the Reader's sagacity, or a vain presumption that he is of the same opinion with the Writer, is but a poor confutation of a long established opinion; that the Miracles of *Pythagoras* are too well attested to be passed over with a sneer; and that *Porphyr* assures us, that^f it was neither for want of number or agreement about them, that he did not trouble us with more; but that so many on the contrary are affirmed of him with *one consent*; that in short no one had ever been superiour to him in the province of Wonders.

I know what *some* people would have said if such Miracles as these had been related of *Christ* though ever so well attested; but at present we need not aggravate the low condition of our adversaries by that cruel circumstance in the Conquerour of killing them with their own weapons, when others are ready.

I

^f Μυρία δ' ἑτέρα θαυμάσια ὅτιρα καὶ θεϊότερα περὶ τ' ἀνδρὸς
ὁμαλῶς καὶ συμφώνως εἰρηται, ὡς ἀπλῶς εἰπεῖν, καὶ ἕθεν
ὑπευόθη πλείονα ἢ περὶ τ' ὅτιρα. *Porphyr. de vit. Pyth.*

Christian Miracles considered. 83

I shall omit therefore the circumstances of these Miracles, which they would have been sure to have urged against us in a like case, because the evidence they rest upon is very insecure: it being chiefly that of two *professed Enemies* to the Cross of *Christ*, two *bold Supporters* of their Master's cause, and two *vain Recorders* of empty wonders several hundred years after they happened.

And yet, weak as this testimony is, some of it at least must in all probability be taken away; since *Jamblichus* goes not all the lengths of *Porphyry*, and as he had not all his zeal against the Christian Miracles, so of consequence he had not all of it for the *Pythagorean*.

But what is more than this, though these Authors probably recorded these things from the idle reports and empty authorities of the *Pythagoreans*, and though one* of them at least has the assurance to tell us, that they were uniformly and generally assented to; yet he could not but know that the fact was quite otherwise in his times; and that many had imputed them to *Magic*, many to *Imposture*.^s

* *Porphyry*. ubi supra.

^s *Stanley's Lives of the Philosophers*, part 9. c. 18.

84 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Plutarch, an Author so attached to wonders as to lessen him in the esteem of many, was not yet so credulous as to admit those of *Pythagoras*: at least we cannot expect a very favourable judgement of them from him, who assures us, that the Miracle of the Eagle was an Imposture, and that he only called down one which had been made tame by him before.^h

The Golden Thigh has met with the same contempt from him as well as the Poet whom he introduces on this occasion; and indeed there is such a variety of opinions about it amongst the Writers of Antiquity, that we are so far from being sure that it was a Miracle, that it is hard at this time to tell what it means.

Whoever has a mind to see this great *disagreement*, which the shameless *Porphyr* has called *unanimity*,ⁱ may consult the ^k Authors quoted in the margin. It is time that we proceed

^h Καὶ γὰρ ἐκεῖνος αἰτὸν τε δοκεῖ πρᾶναι Φωναῖς τισιν ἐπισήσας καὶ καταγαγὼν ὑπερεπτάμενον, τὸν τε μηρὸν ἀποφῆναι χρυσοῦν Ὀλυμπιάσι διαπορευόμενος τὴν πανήγυριν. ἄλλας τε τερατώδεις μηχανὰς αὐτῷ ἢ πράξεις ἀναγέλλουσιν. *Plutarch. in Numa.*

ⁱ *Porphyr. ubi supra*

Christian Miracles considered. 85

ceed to something more substantial, if it may be found.

And this, it may be allowed, is the Dæmon of *Socrates*, as having something more of dignity and weight in its nature: but then how is the relation of it supported? by the testimony of *Plato*? But who can believe one that whilst his Master was living had related so many falsties of him in one Dialogue, that ¹ *Socrates* himself was ashamed to own them? By the testimony of *Plato* and *Xenophon* too? But who can believe their joint report, who have contradicted each other in the most remarkable circumstance of his life; when the first assures us, that the Oracle represented him as the wisest of men; ^m the second as the justest, the most ingenuous, and most temperate? ⁿ but

* *Diogen. Laert.* in Vit. *Pythag.* *Ælian.* Var. Hist. L. 2. *Timon* apud *Plutarch.* in *Numa.* *Origen.* cont. *Cels.* L. 6. *Cæc.* *Rhodogin.* L. 19. *Calcagnin.* *Epist.* L. 3. *Del Rio.* *disquisit. Magic.* L. 1. c. 5.

¹ Φασὶ δὲ καὶ Σωκράτην αὐξάντα τὸν Λύσιον ἀναγινώσκοντος Πλάτωνος, Ἡράκλειος, εἰπεῖν, ὡς πολλὰ μὲν κατεψεύδετο ὁ νεανίσκος; Οὐκ ὀλίγα γὰρ ἂν ἐκ εἴρηκε Σωκράτης, γέγραφεν ἀνὴρ. *Diogen. Laert.* in Vit. *Platon.*

^m *Plato* in *Apolog. Socrat.*

ⁿ *Xenophon.* *Memorab. Socrat.*

86 *The Heathen rejection of the*

but what is still worse, when not only on this account there is some reason to think that neither of them spoke truth; but likewise when we may well conclude from ° *Plutarch* that the whole transaction was had in derision by the Antients in general?

But if neither *Plato* nor *Xenophon* are to be credited in this particular; are we lastly to admit the testimony of *Socrates* himself? But how is this testimony to be had? is it not to be deduced from the same source we have just now mentioned? and if the *source* be corrupted, how can the *stream* be pure? if we are not to believe the actions of *Socrates* on this authority, why are we to believe his words?

But granting farther that this declaration of *Socrates* was really made, why are we to admit it? Was this account supposed to mean any thing extraordinary? If it did *not*, where was

° *Plutarch. adversus Colot.* Καὶ δηλώσαμεν ὅτι Κρησμὸν ἐκ Δελφῶν περὶ Σωκράτους ἀνένευκε ὁ Χαιρεφῶν (ὃν ἴσμεν ἀπαυλῆς) τὰῦτα ἀπείρηκε. τὸ μὲν ἐν τῷ Χαιρεφῶντι, διὰ τὸ τελῶς σοφιστικὸν ἢ φορτικὸν διήγημα εἶναι, παρύσομεν. Φορτικὸς γὰρ ἐν ὃ Πλάτων ὁ τῷτοι ἀναβράσας τὸν Κρησμὸν, &c.

Christian Miracles considered. 87

was the Miracle? If it *did*, why was *Socrates* chiefly thought worthy of this supernatural aid? Upon account of his extraordinary sanctity? But to ^p this we see his title was disputed amongst his Countrymen; or if it was not, it could not have been the means of bringing so remarkable a blessing on him *alone*.

Pythagoras was as holy and virtuous as he; but without any ^a Dæmon to assist him in his conduct, and confirm him in his principles: He did, indeed, make profession of a doctrine as

EX-

^p *Plutarch. de Herodot. Malignit. Plat. in Apol. Soc. Xenoph. Mem. Charpentier, vie de Socrate.*

^a There is indeed some * obscure mention made in Antiquity of a Dæmon attending on *Pythagoras*, *Numa*, *Scipio*, and some others; but these seem to be of so inferior a nature, that the Dæmon of *Socrates*, like *Aaron's* Serpent, has *swallowed them up*, as all-devouring Time has since done to *that*.

* Itidem ex sempiternis Homeri carminibus intelligi datur, non Deos Cælestes cum viris fortibus colloquutos, nec adfuisse pugnantibus vel juvisse, sed familiares Genios cum iisdem versatos: quorum adminiculis præcipuis *Pythagoras* enituisse dicitur et *Socrates*, *Numaque*, *Popilius*, et superior *Scipio*, et (ut quidam existumant) *Marius* et *Octavianus*, cui *Augusti* vocabulum delatum est primo; *Hermesque* ter maximus, et *Tyaneus* *Apollonius*, atque *Plotinus* ausus quædam super hac re disserere mystica, alteque monstrare quibus primordiis hi Genii animis connexi mortalium; &c. *Ammian. Marcellin. L. 1.*

88 *The Heathen rejection of the*

extraordinary as that of *Socrates*, and *both* of them have an *equal* claim to the credit of Mankind: there is just as much reason to believe on the report of the one, that a Dæmon directed his actions, as there is to believe on the report of the other, that his Soul had resided in so many different Men, and that he fought as *Euphorbus*, before he philosophised as *Pythagoras*.^r

I am aware, indeed, that the *Metempsychosis* has been *explained away* by some, as well as the Dæmon of *Socrates* by others; of the former it has been asserted, that there was in reality no such thing, that it was only a doctrine, the principal intent of which was to shew, that vice debased Men to Beasts;^s that the debauched Person was fitly represented by a *Swine*, the malicious one by a *Serpent*, and the rapacious one by a *Wolf*: and the latter many^t have divested of all appearance of Miracle, and re-

^r *Ovid. Metam. L. 15. Laëtant. div. inst. L. 3. c. 16. Iamblich. vit. Pyth. c. 14. Porphy. ibid.*

^s *Dacier. vie de Pythagore. Stanley's Lives. part 9.*

^t *Apuleius de Deo Socr. Plut. de Dæm. Soc. Charpentier, vie de Socr.*

Christian Miracles considered. 89

reduced to the plain and simple suggestions of Reason.

But the Comments of Men are *one* thing, the real Doctrine *another*; nothing can be more plain and express, than the testimonies of *both* for their respective opinions: of *Pythagoras* both *Porphyry* and *Jamblicus* have recorded, that he not only pronounced without any hesitation, that he had once been a different Person himself, but likewise made others most clearly and perfectly recollect what they had thought of, and transacted in their former state.*

And of *Socrates* we are informed by those who conversed with him, that he positively delivered the following testimony of the matter: That he had a Dæmon attending upon him by divine lot or appointment from the time of his childhood; and that this Dæmon was a voice, which, whenever it happened, was to *dissuade* him

* Πολλοῖς δὲ τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων ἀνεμίμνησκε τὸ πρότερον βίην, &c. Καὶ εἰαυτὸν δ' ἀναμφιλέκτοις τεκμηρίοις ἀπίστων Εὐφορβὸν τὸν Πάυνον. Porphyr. vit. Pythag.

Ἐνεργέστατα καὶ σαφῶς ἀνεμίμνησκε τῶν ἐντυγχανόντων πολλὰς τὸν πρότερον βίην, &c. Jamblic. ibid. c. 14.

90 *The Heathen rejection of the*

him from going on with his present undertaking; but that it never actually *persuaded* him to any thing.*

After such an account of these doctrines by those who must be supposed to be fully acquainted with them, it will be no easy matter to acquiesce in any novel opinions about them; especially since the chief reason against the existence of them both is drawn from their apparent absurdity, * which would equally prove against whole systems of Philosophy, and actually unsettle the firmest doctrines of Antiquity.

One of the wisest of the Antients has himself assured us, that there is nothing so ⁷ absurd, but

* Ἐς-ὶ γὰρ θεία μοίρα παρεπόμενον ἰμοὶ ἐκ παιδὸς ἀρ-
ξάμενον Δαιμόνιον. ἔστι δὲ τὸτο φωνή, ἥ, ὅταν γίνηται, αἰ-
μοὶ σημαίνει ὃ ἂν μέλλω πράττειν, τὸτὶ ἀποτροπὴν
προτρέπει δ' ὑπέροτε. Socrat. apud Plat. in Theage!

* Our learned Countryman *Warburton* has made *Pythagoras* ample amends for the vain endeavours of some to take away his doctrine of Transmigration, by insisting that it was double; the natural and the moral, the first of which *Pythagoras* really believed, the last he did not. *Warburton's Divine Legat.* V. 1.

⁷ *Cicero de Divinat.* L. 2.

but what some Philosopher has advanced ; and therefore it is no wonder that ~~these~~ should not escape a censure common to all ; which yet, however in the present case, will not be so generally admitted ; since with many the *Metempsychosis* will not be looked upon as so manifest an absurdity ; or if it is, it yet belongs not to *Pythagoras*, who borrowed * it from the East, where it still subsists, as well as in some other parts of the World.

This likewise is the case with the *Dæmon* of *Socrates* ; which, whether it signifies Omens taken from those he conversed with, or the Genius thought to be common to the whole race of Men ; whether it signifies a human Voice, or a divine ; whether no voice at all, but only an impression of the mind ; whether the prodigy of an Apparition joined to prodigy of the Voice ; or whether only the common action of sneezing, or common principles

* *Diodor. Sic. L. 1. Herodot. L. 2. Ricaut. L. 2. Bekker, le Monde Enchanté. L. 1. c. 14. La Transmigration des ames d'un Corps dans un autre, non seulement des ames humaines, mais aussi celles des Bêtes a pareillement lieu chez les Mahometans.*

92 *The Heathen rejection of the*

ples of reflection; has yet been admitted in every sense by men in almost every age.^a

This is no place to enlarge on the proof of this point, especially as it will very readily be granted, that the doctrine is fanciful enough: I cannot however dismiss the present topic without observing somewhat of the whimsical and inconstant judgement of Mankind; of the very unequal lot of the *same* visionary Pretenders, and the very *different* fortune of the *same* unreasonable opinion.

A celebrated ^bMan amongst the Moderns has talked much in the same manner about his Dæmon, as *Socrates* amongst the Ancients; and yet the *one* only drew on himself contempt and derision, while the *other* acquired by it the esteem of his Countrymen, and the veneration of Antiquity.

But if this be imputed to the different circumstances of different ages, or to the fluctuating

^a *Plut. de Dæmon. Soc. Apul. de Dro Soc. Plat. Phæd. Apolog. Charpent, vie de Soc. Fraguier, Dissert, imprimée dans 4 Vol. De l'Acad. des Belles Lettres.*

^b *Cardan. vid. Bayle, Dict. Hist. et Critique voce Cardan, Naudé, Apolog. des Grands Hommes, c. 13.*

Christian Miracles considered. 93

ting and uncertain declaration of the *Modern*, who, though he positively asserts in some^b places, that a *Dæmon* directed him, yet in^d others he seems to doubt or disown it; yet why must the labours of the present age be so unequally bestowed on the *ecclaircissement* of the two opinions? why must the *poor Dæmon* of *Cardan* be neglected and forgot, while that of *Socrates* engages the attention of the curious, and the admiration of the learned?*

On this occasion one cannot help reflecting on the superior advantages of Antiquity, which, shewing its Worthies like a stately fabric at a distance, strongly excites us to a *thorough inspection* of what is but partially seen; while the present

* Vid. *Dialog. Tetim.* id. *De Libris Propriis.*

^d Id. *ibid.* id. *De Rerum Varietate.*

* If therefore we rank this *Dæmon* of *Cardan* with those inferior ones of *Pythagoras*, *Numa*, &c. mentioned before, he ought not much to lament its fate, when he may comfort himself with reflecting that the chief reason of the inferiority of his own as well as other *Dæmons* to that of *Socrates* is, because they were not so confidently pretended to; and that all Men, as *Menander* expresses it, have much the same claim on this head if they had but the same boldness to assert it.

Ἄπαντι Δαίμων ἀνδρὶ τῷ γενομένῳ

Ἄπαντες ἔσι μυσ-αγωγὸς τῷ βίῃ.

94 *The Heathen rejection of the*

present age, placing its most distinguished persons in the most conspicuous light, leaves no fund or materials for any farther enquiry.

It is time that we now proceed from this solitary miracle of *Socrates*, to the numerous ones of *Apollonius*; but their number will not support them; and, as we observed before, that that there was sufficient reason for *Hierocles's* so little insisting on the Wonders of some of the more antient Philosophers, because of the extreme levity of the circumstances attending them; so this objection will, notwithstanding the pompous setting out of *Hierocles*, remain in full force against his own Philosopher: on this account therefore it will be needless now to insist on the probable design of this work to please the Empress *Julia*; on the romantic turn, and unchristian disposition of that Empress; on the supposed forgery of the so-long-unpublished Commentaries of *Damis*; * on the uncertainty of such facts, which *Philostatus* himself acknowledges that he had from report and tra-

* *Tillemont, vie d'Apollon.*

* *Philost. vit. Apollon. L. 2, 3.*

Christian Miracles considered. 95

tradition; but above all, on the nature of his doctrine, the absurdity of his conduct, and circumstances of his life.

Neither would there be any greater occasion to insist on that similitude which some learned men have pretended to find between the chief actions of *Apollonius's* life, and those of our Saviour; by which they hope to prove the real intention of the work: I shall however repeat them in the words of a learned Modern, lest I should seem to neglect what by some may be thought of great importance to this subject — the words are these :

“Without

That of Fate especially, as appears by what follows; looking on the Statue of *Domitian*, he said :

“O Fool, how ignorant art thou of the nature of Fate!

“for he who is to succeed you, shall revive, though you

“kill him.” *Philost.* L. 7. c. 9. *Euseb. cont. Hier.* c. 43.

This doctrine *Eusebius* has confuted at large, c. 45. ad finem.

He professed that he knew all Languages, and yet made use of an Interpreter. *Philost.* L. 1. c. 19. L. 2. c. 11.

L. 6. c. 5. L. 9. c. 10. *Euseb. cont. Hierol.* c. 14.

He made a speech for his Trial, and knew not that he should not use it, though he is represented as knowing all things. *Philost.* L. 1. c. 19. L. 7. c. 14. *Euseb.*

cont. Hier. c. 37. 41.

96 *The Heathen rejection of the*

“ Without all question, the extravagancies of
 “ *Philostratus* upon his *Apollonius* took their
 “ rise from the true Miracles of our Saviour;
 “ since he hath been pleased to oppose the
 “ Dæmon which came to give *Apollonius's*
 “ Mother notice of his nativity, to the mystery
 “ of the Annunciation; the singing of Swans
 “ to that of the Angels; the Lightning that fell
 “ from Heaven, to the Star that appeared in
 “ *Betlehem*; the Letters sent to him from
 “ divers Kings, to the Adoration of the *Magi*;
 “ the discourses he held when very young in
 “ the Temple of *Æsculapius*, to the Disputation
 “ of Christ among the Doctors; the questions
 “ put to him by his disciples, to those of the A-
 “ postles; the judgement he passed upon the Eu-
 “ nuch and the Concubine, to that on the Wo-
 “ man taken in Adultery; the Apparition he met
 “ with on Mount *Caucasus*, to the Temptation
 “ of the Devil in the Wilderness; the Incre-
 “ dulity of the *Ephesians*, to that of the *Jews*;
 “ his deliverance of a young man possessed with
 “ a Devil, to the like action of *Christ*; the
 “ Maid he raised to life at *Rome*, to *Jairus's*
 “ Daughter; his appearance to *Damis* and
 “ *Demetrius* without the City, to that of our
 “ Saviour to the two Disciples going to *Emmaus*;
 “ the

Christian Miracles considered. 97

“ the words he said to them, to those of *Jesus*
 “ *Christ, A Spirit hath not flesh and bones ;* *
 “ and lastly his Death and Ascension, either
 “ to that of *Christ*, or to the translation of
 “ *Enoch* or *Elijah*. ”

We see that the design of this reasoning is to shew (what has been much suspected) that this Work of *Philostatus* was written to discredit Christianity, which under the Reign of *Severus* the Heathens endeavoured to suppress by all possible means : I would not however warrant all that this Author has said, any more than I would positively assert that another pretended Miracle of the *Brachmans* was related on the same occasion; though it would be a much more probable supposition, as the reason otherwise given for it is so very ridiculous.

The Miracle which I mean is, that ordinary one of the ^b *Brachmans*; who, as *Damis* says,
 “ walk

* St. Luke 24. 39.

“ *Naude, Apologie des Grandes Hommes accuses de la Magie. c. 12. Philostat. L. 1. c. 3, 4, 7, 9, 19. L. 2. c. 2. L. 4. c. 1, 6, 16. L. 8. c. 5, 10, 12, 30.*

^b “ Ο δὲ γε Δάμις Φησὶ μεταωροσκόπους ἰδεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἐς πῆχυν δύο, ἢ θαυματοποιίας ἕνεκα, τὸ γὰρ
 G φιλό-

98 *The Heathen rejection of the*

“ walk in the air at two or three cubits distance from the Earth, not to raise admiration, for that mean ambition they detested, but because whatever they do, when removed from the Earth like the Sun, is more acceptable to the God.”

There is a nearer resemblance between this Miracle and that of *Christ's* walking on the Sea, than between any of the above-mentioned, except the raising of the *Roman Maid*, and *Jairus's Daughter*; in which indeed there is a great similitude; and if there is any truth in the present observation, an intimation perhaps too of the vanity of this Miracle of *Christ*; since, as he is recorded in Scripture to have said, that *the Maid was not dead but slept*;^c so *Philostatus* says on this occasion, that it was not certain that there were not some remains of life in the young Woman, though she was really carried out, and her Lover mournfully followed the Bier.^d

There

φιλότιμον τὸ παραιτεῖσθαι τὰς ἀνδρας, ἀλλὰ ὅποσα τῷ ἡλίῳ ξυναποβαίνοντες τῆς γῆς δρῶσιν, ὡς πρόσφορα τῷ θεῷ πράττοντες. *Philost. L. 3. c. 15.*

^c St. *Matt.* 9. 24.

^d *Philost.* L. 4. c. 45.

Christian Miracles considered. 99

There is indeed in some other particulars a much more surprising likeness than in any that this Author has mentioned; as between the Conversation of *Christ* with the *Samaritan Woman*, and the Story of the young *Egyptian's* life related by *Apollonius*; between the words of *Christ*, *fear not those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul,** and the answer much of the same nature which *Apollonius* made to *Domitian*; between the vanishing of *Christ* from the multitude, and that of *Apollonius* from the tribunal;[†] between the Resurrection of *Christ*, and the passage of *Apollonius* through *Trophonius's* Cave,[‡] &c. But I would not insist on this similitude myself, though much more probable than it is, because it is as easy to be made use of *against* the Christian Religion as *for* it; especially by those men, who, admitting the fact and yet denying the reason of it, might alledge with some colour of probability the confessed equality of power that is related of this Pretender, at the very same time that they

* Id. L. 6. c. 3.

* St. *Matt.* 10. 28.

† Id. L. 8. c. 5. Πέμπει τὸν λαβόμενον μετ' αὐτοῦ τὸ σῶμα, ἐν γὰρ ψυχὴν ἀδύνατον.

‡ Id. *ibid.*

‡ Id. L. 8. c. 19.

100 *The Heathen rejection of the*
they required a stronger proof than is hitherto
brought of its foundation.

It is well therefore that no such proof as this
is wanting, any more than such an one as arises
from the other suspicious particulars mentioned
before;ⁱ which, though many of them are cer-
tain, and all of them probable, yet at present need
not at all be urged to discredit a Work, which
only one relation of the *Indian Expedition* has
shook to its foundation : and it will be impossi-
ble to believe that the Miracles reported in it are
true, where so many other things are *false* ;
where so many Contradictions to modern Geo-
graphy appear ; and where so many unnatural
and unaccountable things are related, as not only
never *have* existed, but in reality never *can*.^k

The Miracles of *Apollonius*, notwithstanding
the just-mentioned similitude of some, are yet
far from being equal either in number or circum-
stances to those of *Christ*, though they were really
admitted ; and yet even those of *Christ* could
not support such an History as that of *Philos-
tratus*,

ⁱ Page 94, 95.

^k *Philostrat. Lib. 3. passim.*

tratus; and with equal absurdities the *Bible* itself must fall.

As this is a rule by which *Christians* are willing that their own cause should be tried, it is but equitable that they should try that of others by the same; and whatever cause refuses it, must be violently suspected; whatever cannot abide it, must really be convicted of imposture.

Let us therefore select some parts of the History in order to judge of it by this rule:— Something extraordinary has been mentioned of the *Brachmans* already, but it is unfortunately joined with such a reason as exposes both the reason and relation to contempt; but this will be more apparent in what follows.— In some parts of the third book these *Philosophers* are represented as curing the Sick, healing the Lame, restoring the Blind, and casting out Devils; ¹ and yet in the same book they are represented as presiding over Magical Feasts, where Tables furnished with provisions come in, like *Homer's* Tripods, of their own accord, which were followed by Brazen Butlers, who

¹ *Philost.* L. 3. c. 38, 39.

102 *The Heathen rejection of the*

administered, like *Ganymede* and *Pelops*, by spontaneous motion ; whilst the Earth produced Herbs that were softer than beds, and the provisions were better dressed by invisible hands than if they had been taken care of by Cooks.^m

One would not indeed be surprised that Men, who were able to perform the *first* sort of wonders, should be able likewise to perform the *latter* : the degree of power in each case is equal,

^m *Philost.* L. 3. c. 27. We have in this place a pleasant instance of the indulgence and partiality of an Editor to his work. *Olearius*, who is always endeavouring to vindicate his Author's reputation, would not have these things looked upon as fabulous, but thinks from the word *ισχυροδυναμι*, which is applied to these tables in the sixth book on the same occasion, that they were introduced by some Machines ; never considering that the propriety of this word is as great in whatever way this wonder was effected ; that it was in vain to bring a solution of one instance by natural means, whilst another remained inexplicable by the same ; and as he had got no other Machines ready to carry his *Brachmans* through the air, his Author could not easily escape the charge of futility : Well ; but this wonder of the *Brachmans* is related by *Damis*, who, being a plain and simple man, might relate what *Apollonius* says of their living in the Earth and out of it, in this manner ; and no one being less proper than *Damis* to solve these *Ænigmas*, he makes no doubt but that most of the Fables in the book were owing to his
sim-

equal, but the different application of it confutes the whole ; *Butlers* of brass and *ejected Dæmons* can never consist together ; even Magic itself, according to the opinion of some, could not work such different wonders without being split into two sorts ; the one to engage in the good actions, the other in the ridiculous. ^a

But the same observations may be made (as it would be expected they should) on *Apollonius* himself,

simplicity.* — This is pleasanter still : *Damis* relates this affair of the *Brachmans*, and *Apollonius* relates that of the Magical Feasts, from which *Damis* was absent : Now *Damis*, who is a simple man, makes a Miracle of a common thing, and *Apollonius*, who is not a simple man, does the same ; What other conclusion therefore can we make, than that the charge of simplicity belongs to them both, and in this case indeed to the *Editor* too. — I need not say after this, that in the 6th book, where *Thespesion* objects to these wonders, and *Apollonius* replies, there is no hint of their being owing to natural causes ; though indeed if they were, the manner of relating them is as absurd on the other hand ; since it is altogether as foolish to record for wonders what were only natural events, as to record them with such circumstances as those which we have mentioned.

* At ænigmatibus hisce nemo minus idoneus erat solvendis quam *Damis*, cujus simplicitati, &c. *Olear.* in Locum.

^a *Iamblich. de Myster.* sect. 3, c. 13, 14, 15.

Id. sect. 10. c. 7. *Aug. de Civ. De. L.* 10. c. 9.

himself, who, whether he resembles *Christ* or not, is certainly made to resemble his Master *Pythagoras*; ° and, amongst other extraordinary actions in common to them both, he had this important one of conversing with beasts; but for fear that we should believe it, he tells us how he learned it; namely, by feeding on the hearts, or as some think the liver of Dragons, ^p which the *Arabians* likewise did, and had the same unusual faculty.

Christians have at least some obligations to *Philostatus* for freeing them from some troubles in the confutation of his Romance; if he had only asserted that *Apollonius* had the art of conversing with Beasts, we might easily have disbelieved, but could not really have disproved it

° He was seen suddenly in two places, as *Pythagoras* was. *Philost.* L. 4. c. 10.

^p *Euseb.* cont. *Hieroc.* c. 10. *Philost.* L. 1. c. 20.
 Ξυμβάλλονται δὲ τῶν ἀλόγων, σιτέμενοι τῶν δρακόντων, οἱ μὲν καρδίαν φασίν, οἱ δὲ ἥπαρ.

^q *Porphyr.* de *Abstinent.* L. 3. *Cicero* de *Divin.* Lib. 1. id. de *Legib.* L. 2.

^r Nay, if we believe *Cicero's* account of the *Arabians*, they were far from being of the first rank in the knowledge of Divination, even amongst their barbarous Neighbours that professed it; they had indeed an equal claim

to

Christian Miracles considered. 105

it; but at present he has given us a certain and effectual method of knowing that he told a lye.

The *Arabians* were indeed a People much given to divination; ^a but what extraordinary skill in it had they above some other Nations? If they *had*, yet what has Prophecy from Birds to do with conversing with them? and who besides *Philostratus* ever complimented them with this? But if they *had* this faculty, how could they acquire it by the means above-mentioned? of what efficacy can that sort of food be of here? and what connection is there between the cause and effect? If there *is*, why does it not yet prevail? and why is not that part of the world *at present* distinguished by such a race of Men? Is the species of Dragons perished?

But

to it with many of them, but all yielded to the *Pisidians*; which it is pity *Philostratus* did not consider; for certainly he should have ascribed such extraordinary wonders in this art, to those who were the greatest masters of it.

Neque enim Polydii &c. tantum nomen fuisset, neque tot nationes id ad hoc tempus retinissent, Arabum, Phrygum, Lycaonum, Cilicum, maximeque Pisidarum, nisi vetustas ea certa esse docuisset. *Cicer. de Legib. L. 2.*

Quem irridebant Collegæ tui, eumque tum Pisidam, tum Soranum Augurum esse dicebant. *Id. de Divin. L. 1.*

106 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But that seldom, if ever, happens in Nature. has it changed its situation, and fled from a people that destroyed them for their excellence? Why then do we not hear of *another* that made the same use of them? Have they fled likewise from *that*? Why then do we not hear of *all* the Nations of the world by turns partaking of so extraordinary an accomplishment?

Indeed there is just as much reason for one as another; and I make no doubt but the Reader would have thought so without any examination; he will therefore excuse it in what is to follow, and will give me leave to place the 'Pygmies and Sciapodes, the tubs of Rain and speaking Elm, the Plague-foretelling Dæmon and King-descended Lion, in the same num-

* *Eusebius* confutes this story by the inconsistency of it with the principles of *Apollonius*, who, being a strict *Pythagorean*, could not eat any flesh, and of consequence not the heart or liver of *Dragons*. *Euseb. cont. Hieroc. c. 10.*

' *Philost.* L. 3. c. 45. L. 5. c. 42. L. 6. c. 10. L. 3. c. 14. The *Sciapodes Apollonius* by his enquiry only seemed very willing to believe, but the Persons he asked could not assure him that they really existed. The reason of their name is thus given by *Pliny*: "Sciapodes dicuntur, quod
" in majori æstu humi jacentes resupini umbra se pedum
" protegunt." *Plin. N. H. L. 7. c. 2.*

number of absurdities without any argument or proof; nay he must permit me to be so far an Infidel in this *Bible of Hierocles*, as boldly to assert, that the simple account of Wool growing out of the Earth, is fit only for such amongst his Countrymen as could believe, according to the letter, the history of the *Golden Fleece*; * and that the absurd relation of tubs^z of wind is fitter to make part of a *Laplander's* Creed, than to be imposed on ingenuous and thinking Men,

But notwithstanding the glaring absurdity of such accounts as these, we have seen already how some can endeavour to palliate them; and some likewise have thought proper to add another defence to this, by imputing them to Magic.

* *Philostat.* L. 3. c. 15. The words are, ἡ δὲ ὕλη τῆς ἱερῆς, ἔστιν αὐτοφύεις ἡγὰρ φύει, and therefore it cannot be the Cotton now used; and it must likewise be very rare, because he assures us, that only the Priests Garments were made of it. Some imagine it to be the *Asbestos* made of a Stone. On this head, see *Plut. de Defect. Orac.* *Plin. N. H.* L. 19. c. 40. *Pearson. Prolegom. in Hierocl.*

* The selling of Wind, which is a story pretty much like this, is related by *Olaus*; and another of them is related by *Herodotus* of the Navy of *Xerxes* tossed in a tempest of three days till stopped by the Magi. *Olai. Hist. de Gent. Septent. Incant.* L. 3. *Herodot.* L. 7.

108 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Magic. As many among the antients did so, *Eusebius*, in particular, has insisted much on it in what he has said against *Hierocles*; and particularly informs us, that even in his own age there were some living, who had found the magical Machines that belonged to him.^y

As different sentiments and opinions prevail in different Ages of the world, I dare say it will not be now expected that any one should choose this method of defence,^z especially when there is so little need of it after what has been already said: I shall therefore conclude this subject with a few reflections on this work of *Philostratus*; which, together with the reception of it, in whatever light it be considered must be extremely surprising.

For if it was done with a design to confront Christianity, and set up *Apollonius* against *Christ*, there would then indeed be no occasion to
con-

^y *Euseb. cont. Hierocl. c. 44.* *Olearius* has added some other authorities to confirm *Eusebius's* remark. *Johann. Antiochen. Chronogr. p. 342.* *Tzetzes, Chiliad. 11. Hist. 60.*

^z Yet the learned * *Cudworth* has taken one little better, if not much worse, by allowing all his Miracles, and imputing them to the Devil; insomuch that he thinks
it

Christian Miracles considered. 109

confute it; but it is amazing to consider how men in their senses could think this an effectual method of bringing about their design; since even insatuation itself must be sensible of the difference between the actions of their lives, and importance of their doctrines.

If it was done with a design to banter Christianity, why is not the banter more strong? why is neither this Religion, nor the Author of it, once so much as named? and why are we naturally led in the perusal of the book more to admire the Hero that is celebrated in it himself, than to laugh at, or condemn his Rival?

If it was a grave and serious performance upon the whole, without any reference to Christianity, and, notwithstanding some opposers, was well received by the Heathens; this will bring their opinion of Miracles much lower then we intended, and much lower indeed

it a solution of the cure of the blind and lame man by *Vespasian*, that he was familiar with *Apollonius*, and probably had his assistance on this occasion. † *Eusebius* goes not so far as this.

* *Cudworth's Intellectual System*, cap. 4. §. 15.

† *Euseb. cont. Hierocl.* c. 28, 29, 30, &c.

110 *The Heathen rejection of the*

indeed than one would think it could be; since in this case they must admit such absurd relations in the number of them, as, by the nature of their principles, they could not reasonably esteem; for though they could believe any thing of Magicians (which we shall see more at large hereafter) yet in a man so excellent as *Apollonius* is described to be, they would naturally expect a greater reverence for Truth in his Relations, and a greater uniformity of Conduct in his Life.

But if (as the above-mentioned Editor thinks) it is a sincere relation of the life of *Apollonius*, excepting that many Fables in it are owing to the simplicity of *Damis*; yet how in this case shall we account for his own good opinion of it, as well as that of the world? since the simplicity of *Damis*, to say nothing of his Master's, prevails throughout; and if ever it permits us to have a glimpse of truth, we are afraid in the next sentence of having a figment in its stead.

I do not know whether it is of much consequence after this celebrated work of *Philostratus* to mention the trifling one of *Eunapius*; who

Christian Miracles considered. III

who is supposed by some ^a to have recorded the Miracles of his Philosophers, as much in opposition to those of the Saints and Martyrs, as the other did in opposition to those of *Christ*: And, indeed, the Miracles of the primitive Christians are not more inferiour to those of *Christ*, than both this Author and his Wonders are to the other; he certainly is but the Ape of *Philostratus*, without his sense, his consistency, or his courage.

The following passage ^b will in all probability satisfy the Reader as to this point; it is taken from his life of *Jamblichus*, and immediately follows the relation of that stupid wonder already mentioned in the first Chapter. The words are these: "There are many other
"strange

^a Naudé. *Apolog. des Grandes Hommes*, &c. c. 12.

^b Ἐλέγετο δὲ καὶ παραδοξότερα καὶ τερατωδέστερα. Ἐγὼ δὲ τέττων ἀνέγραφον ἰδεῖν. σφαλερόν τι καὶ θεομιστε πρᾶγμα ἡγούμενος εἰς συγγραφὴν εἰσιμιμον καὶ πεπηγυῖαν ἐπεισάγειν ἀκοὴν διεφθαρμένην καὶ ῥέυσαν. ἅλλα καὶ ταῦτα γράφω δεδοίκως ἀκοὴν ἔσαν, πλὴν ὅσα γὰρ ἔπομαι ἀνδράσιν, οἱ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀπιστοῦντες πρὸς τὴν τῷ Φανέντος αἰδήσειν συνεκάμφθησαν. ἰδεῖς δὲ τῶν ἑταίρων αὐτῷ ἀνέγραψεν, ὅσα γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἰδέναι. τὺτο δὲ εἶπον μετρίως, Αἰδεσίῳ Φησαῖος μῆτε αὐτὸν γεγραφεῖναι, μῆτε ἄλλον τινα τετολημηκεῖναι.

Euphar. Sard. in vit. Jamblich.

112 *The Heathen rejection of the*

“ strange and prodigious things related of him;
 “ which I do not think proper to commit to
 “ writing ; supposing it to be a thing unsafe
 “ and hateful to the Gods, to mix with true
 “ History vain and empty Stories ; nay I should
 “ write this under some apprehensions lest the
 “ rumour should be feigned, unless I had heard
 “ it from those, who believed it, not on the
 “ credit of others, but saw it themselves ;
 “ However none of his Companions, that I
 “ know of, have recorded it ; and I have men-
 “ tioned it modestly, as *Aedestus* says that neither
 “ he himself had written it, nor had any one else
 “ dared to do so.”

It would be hard to find in any Author in his senses a passage fuller of idle chicanery and evasion than this ; it is as *strange and portentous* as any of the Wonders he relates, and ought as little to find a place in true History as those. For what does the Author mean ? does he mean to recommend himself to the world for his judgement and penetration in *rejecting* the Wonders reported of his *Philosophers* ? Why then does he admit so many ? Do these which he has admitted depend on better evidence than the others, as he supposes of the present ? it is
 pity

Christian Miracles considered. 113

pity that they should not likewise be improved in their circumstances, as they improve in their evidence; but what is this evidence? the relation of those very men, he says, who saw the wonder themselves: Why then is he so apprehensive of any danger to his reputation in a matter that was so certain? But none of his companions committed it to writing; and *Ædæsius*, his Scholar, said that none of them *dared*: *not dare*? why not? Reader, the secret is out: it was either because it was false, or because *Jamblicus* was *ashamed* of it, if true.

But however, what none of his Companions durst write, our Author it seems has; but that in so *fluctuating and irresolute* a manner, as to leave some *violent suspicions* of his courage and sincerity.

The real matter seems to be, that he was either *afraid*, like the Scholars, to record a lye, or *ashamed*, like the Master, to own the truth; and as from some other passages in his work the former probably was the case, We must do this Writer the justice to own, at least, that he was inclined to be sincere; and though, for some reasons unknown to us, he might be

H pressed

114 *The Heathen rejection of the*

pressed into the field of Wonders, yet he has taken care to give us some intimation that he recorded them *against his judgement*, and admitted them *against his will*.*

Very different from these Miracles related by a vain Philosopher on his fraternity, are those numerous and powerful ones related of *Æsculapius*;

* The place we have been considering is not the only one where he gives us this intimation: in * speaking of *Porphyry*, he tells us what *Porphyry* says of his casting a Devil out of a Bath; but then he adds, that *Porphyry* was young when he wrote this Work; and in some other places he does not speak with that boldness and freedom that we expect from a man who is convinced himself, and has a mind to convince others: Whoever has a mind to see his manner of behaviour on these occasions, will have the best view of it in the actions of *Maximus* and *Sosipatra* †.

* This authority is indeed surprizing, as any one may see who thinks it worth while to consult the following Authors on this subject. *Euseb. Præp. Evangel. L. 5. Arrian. de Expedit. Alexand. L. 7. Orig. cont. Cels. L. 3. Jamblic. de Myst. s. 3. c. 3. Strab. Geogr. L. 8. Elian. de Animal. L. 11. c. 34. Julian. apud Cyrill. L. 7. Eunap. de vit. Philos. in Ædesio &c.*

* *Cudworth's Intellectual System, c. 5. sect. 84. Note 1. Ed. Mosh. Le Clerc, Histoire de la Médecine. Liv. 1. c. 20. The Table supposed to be found in the Temple of*

Æscu-
* *Eunap. in vit. Porphyrii. † Id. in vit. Maximi. et Ædes.*

Christian Miracles considered. 115

lapius; which were not only pretended to be wrought for much more important purposes, but likewise rested on much better authority than the faint and timid assertions of a Partner in his art.

But as in confutation of these I am already well prevented by *Mosheimius*, and *Le Clerc*,

Æsculapius and preserved in *Gruter*, mentions the cure of four men, two of whom were Blind, the third vomited blood, and the last had such a disorder in his side that his life was despaired of: the Table mentions some remedies applied to three of them, and the fourth was cured by some superstitious motions; on which account *Le Clerc* observes, that he had no occasion to be cured at all.

Le premier des remedes que ce Dieu ordonne est purement superstitieux, mais les trois autres sont naturels: et il y a apparence que les Pretres d' Esculape n' avoient gueres recours aux remedes de la premiere sorte, si ce n' est lors qu'ils vouloient imposer au peuple en leur produisant des Pertoumes qu' ils avoient gagnés pour feindre des incommodités qu' elles n' avoient point. *Le Clerc. ibid.*

If the Reader would have a more weighty authority than this, he may cast his eyes on the following, which is taken from one who lived nearer to the times of these pretended cures; and, besides, was a Person very well acquainted with the state of the Heathen affairs.

Et quoniam beneficia salutis datæ aliorum Numinum comparatis et Christi: quot millia vultis a nobis debiliū vobis ostendi, quot tabificis affectos morbis, nullam omnino

116 *The Heathen rejection of the*

I proceed to another species of them, which are seconded indeed by a *cloud of Witnesses*, but bear the same marks of Absurdity and Imposture with many that we have mentioned before. These are such amongst those numerous prodigies related by poets and historians as are above the power of nature to produce. But how are they circumstanced, and what is their use? on what authority are they built, and who are witnesses to their reality? who recorded them in times, when they really happened, or who afterwards *separated* the mixture of tradition? who, in short, can assure us that the whole species of them was not owing to

retulisse medicinam, cum per omnia irent supplices Tempia, cum Deorum ante ora prostrati, limina ipsa converrerent osculis; cum Æsculapium ipsum, datorem, ut prædicant, sanitatis quoad illis superfuit vita, et precibus fatigarent, et invitarent miserrimis votis? Nonne alios scimus malis suis commortuos, cruciatibus alios consenuisse morborum, perniciosius alios sese habere cæpisse, postquam dies noctesque in continuis precibus et pietatis expectatione triverunt? quid? ergo prodest ostendere unum aut alterum fortasse curatos, cum tot millibus subvenerit Nemo; et plena sint omnia miserorum infelicitiumque delubra? *Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 1.*

† Romæ autem et circa urbem multa ea hyeme prodigia facta, aut quod evenire solet, motis semel in religionem animis, multa nunciata et temere credita.

Pro-

Christian Miracles considered. 117

to the *folly* of one sort of men, and the *cunning* of another?

But what occasion for this assurance in a case so plain? for do not the wisest men of antiquity frequently drop hints of the vanity of these prodigies? does the *great Reciter* ^e of of them himself seem altogether satisfied with the sincerity of his relation? does not he sometimes seem to intimate that they belonged to the people; that *extraordinary transactions* must have *extraordinary appearances*, and that they were recited because they were expected, rather than because they were true?

Does

Again, Prodigia eo anno multa nunciata sunt, quæ quo magis credebant simplices et religiosi homines, eo etiam plura nunciabantur.

Again, Turbido aliquo tempore, versis in religionem animis, multa visa creditaque prodigia quæ non erant.

Again, In civitate tanto discrimine belli sollicita, quum omnium secundorum adverforumque causas in Deos verterent, multa prodigia nunciabantur. *Liv. Hist. L. 28.*

These passages, with many others of the like nature, are so manifest a proof of what is mentioned of *Livy*, that nothing more need be said to free him from a superstitious belief in prodigies; and **Gregory* the great, who ordered him on this account to be taken out of all his Libraries, deserves rather to be laughed at for his inattention, than commended for his zeal.

* *Casaub. Epist. Ded. in Polyb.*

118 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Does not *Cicero* himself in his philosophical disputations frequently contest the validity of these pretensions? does not he try to *shake the credit* of the most eminent prodigy his Country Annals had produced? Does even his affection to the *Roman* state hinder him from making his favourite *Cotta* conclude that the Apparition of the *Tyndaridæ* was an idle tale; that the *Romans* received no assistance from *them* in their greatest distress; and that it was more reasonable to conclude that the souls of these Brothers^e resided eternally in the
Hea-

^e Nonne mavis illud credere, quod probari potest, animos præclarorum hominum, quales isti Tyndaridæ fuerunt, divinos fuisse et æternos, quam eos qui semel cremati essent, equitare et in acie pugnare potuisse? And when *Balbus* still urged *Cotta*, who is supposed to represent *Cicero*, with the great authority on which this Fable rested; he says, Rumoribus mecum pugnas, Balbe, ego autem à te rationes requiro. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* L. 3.

^a *Cicero de Divinat.* L. 2. See the History of these Prodigies in *Cicero de Divin.* L. 1. *Dionys. Hal.* L. 3. *Liv.* 1. 36. The last of whom says, that after *Nævius* had performed this wonder in confirmation of augury, nothing was done without it; but I suppose most will agree with me that if it had depended on this, nothing would ever have been done by it at all. There is something so like this mentioned by *Dionysius* about the Election of the *Roman* Magistrates that I cannot pass it over: *Romulus*, it seems,

Heavens, than that they rode and fought in the Battle?

And that this was not the sentiment of Cicero only on this particular occasion; that there was not something singularly ridiculous and absurd in this story of the Tyndaridæ, which might give him some reason to reject this, whilst he retained the rest, we learn from his general answer to his Brother Quintus objecting to him the truth of these prodigies: but do you, says he, despise the Whetstone of Nævius,^a and

seems, at his Election had the good fortune to obtain by his prayers a fire^a from Heaven, confirming the choice which the people had made; and therefore it was enacted into a law for the future, that no Magistrate should be chose without the same heavenly approbation.^b

Now such a lightning as is here supposed was an effect something easier to be brought about than the cutting of a Whetstone; and yet it seems to be a most unreasonable imposition on the successors of Romulus: and if their confirmation had in effect depended upon its appearance, it is no wonder that Numa should be so backward in his

^a Μετὰ δὲ τὴν εὐχὴν, ἀστραπὴ διήλθεν ἐκ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐπὶ τὰ δεξιὰ. Dionys. Halic. Rom. Antiq. L. 2.

^b Καὶ κατεστήσατο (ὁ Ρώμυλος) ἐν ἔθει τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν ἅπασι μὴτε βασιλείας, μὴτε ἀρχὰς λαμβάνειν, ἵνα μὴ καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον αὐτοῖς θεσπίσῃ. Id. ibid.

120 *The Heathen rejection of the*

and the *Lituus of Romulus* which could not be burnt, since no such fables as these should have any place in philosophy.

But not content with the demolition of these single prodigies he presses on to the extinction of the whole species of them with one *Herculean stroke*; and with the spirit and freedom of a modern Enquirer will allow nothing, but what is possible; ¹ Let this, says he, be opposed to any prodigy whatsoever; that if it
“ could

acceptance of a Crown so *whimsically bestowed*: for though he was most admirably skilled in all the arts of imposing on the People, yet this was so cross and untoward a circumstance that he wanted *all his tricks*, as well as the real assistance of his *Goddeſs* to assist him.

But the *Romans*, however, as the same *Dionysius* informs us, did in process of time become sensible of this difficulty *themselves*, and wisely abated some *Small portion* of its rigour by ordering the Augur to pronounce that the lightning had happened, when in reality it had not.^c—And if this was likewise the case with the Whetstone of *Nævius* and all the subsequent transactions of Augury, we may begin to see how the former was cut, and know how to agree with *Livy* in all the wonders which followed that celebrated operation.

¹ Mulæ partus a te prolatus est. Res mirabilis, propterea quia non sæpe fit; sed si fieri non potuisset, facta non

^c Τῶν δὲ παρόντων τινὲς Ορειδοσκόπων, &c. Id. *ibid.*

Christian Miracles considered. 121

“ could not be done, it never was ; but if it
“ could, it was no wonder.

The Poets give their testimony to all this at the very same time that they seem to withhold it; for they mention their prodigies only at such *Critical seasons* as they think important enough to require them : Thus ^k *Virgil* at the Death of *Cæsar*, and ^l *Lucan* at the beginning of the civil distractions he is going to celebrate, bring in a *profusion* of wonders answerable to those great Events; ^m *Silius Italicus* does the same

non esset atque hoc contra omina ostenta valeat, nunquam, quod non fieri potuerit, esse factum; sin potuerit, non esse mirandum, *Cic. de Div. L. 2.*

Octavius in *Minutius Felix* seems to imitate this unhappily; as the same reasoning could not well be made use of by a Heathen who *laughed* at prodigies, and a Christian who *esteemed* them; by *one* who was endeavouring to reduce them all to the level, and by *another* who, though he was obliged to reject *some*, did yet found his faith on *others*.

Quid illas aniles fabulas de hominibus aves, de feris hominēs, et de hominibus arbores atque flores? quæ si essent facta, fierent, quæ fieri non possunt, ideo nec facta sunt. *Minuc. Fel. Octav.*

^k *Virg. Georgie. L. 1. ad finem.*

^l *Lucan. Pharsal. L. 1. ad finem, L. 2. Repud. initium.*

^m *Silius Italic. L. 8. ad finem.*

122 *The Heathen rejection of the*

the same in regard to the *Carthaginian War*, and ^a*Statius* in regard to the *Theban*; and ^o*Petr*onius could not so much as give us a specimen of a Poem on a civil war, without giving these a considerable share in it; as if prodigies were essential to signal transactions, and ought never to be omitted.

Nay the Poets do not only seem to think thus of the Prodigies by their uniform manner of

^a *Stat. Thebaid. L. 7.*

[?] *Continuo Clades hominum, venturaque damna
Auspiciis patuere Deum; namque ore cruento
Deformis Titan vultus caligine texit.
Civiles acies jam tum spirare putares.
Parte alia plenos extinxit Cynthia vultus,
Et lucem scelerei subduxit; rupta tonabant
Verticibus lassis montis juga, nec vaga passum
Flumina per notas ibant morientia ripas.
Armorum strepitu cælum furit: et tuba Martem
Sideribus transmissa ciet: jamque Ætna voratur
Ignibus insolitis, et in æthera fulmina mittit.
Ecce inter tumulos atque ossa carentia bustis
Umbrarum facies diro stridore minatur:
Fax stellis comita novis incendia ducit,
Sanguineoque recens descendit Jupiter imbre.*

Petron. Arb. specim. Bell. Civ.

The number of these Lines, one would think, bear much too large a proportion to the rest, but it cannot be helped; they describe Prodigies, which make a figure in a Poem; and War itself must stand still, if these make their claim,

Christian Miracles considered. 123

of introducing them; but one of them seems to bear his testimony to the truth of it in the following remarkable passage;

*Utque semel patuit monstris iter, omnia tempus
Nata suum properant nasci.*^p ———

It would be hard to make a Poet bear witness against himself, and take away any thing from that fund of the *Marvellous* so Essential to his art; and yet this must be the case here, where

no

* *Claud.* in *Eutrop.* L. 2. Another Poet could see something unworthy of God in these Prodigies, though he had more wit than to deny them.

——— *Cur hanc tibi, Rector Olympi,
Sollicitis visum Mortalibus addere curam,
Nescant venturas ut dira per omina Clades?*

Luc. Phar. L. 2.

Silius Italicus says the same:

*Heu vani monitus, frustra que morantia Parcas
Prodigia! heu superi fatis certasse minores!*

* *Claudian* surely did not consider the consequence of his reflection in this place, else he should have ushered it in as a greater Poet than himself has done on a like occasion; i. e. when he advised the Lover, that was beginning to recover of his passion, to avoid all things that might inflame it, amongst which Poetry had no inconsiderable place:

*Eloquar invitus: teneros ne tange poetas:
Submovea dotes impius ipse meas.*

Cal-

124 *The Heathen rejection of the*

no other sense can reasonably be inferred from the passage, than that there was a certain time which was proper for prodigies, which they are always *in haste* to make use of, lest it should any ways escape.

After such proofs as these it must be surely *peevish and senseless* to say with *Quintus* in *Cicero*, on a like occasion; "Let us then deny
"all things, let us burn our Annals, and say
"that every thing is forged; let us in short do
"any thing, sooner than admit the care of the
"Gods in human affairs": for why must we deny *all* things, because we must deny *some*? Why must we burn those Annals which convey to us

Callimachum fugito; non est inimicus amor;

Et cum Callimacho tu quoque, Coe, noces.

Me certe Sappho meliorem fecit amicæ:

Nec rigidos mores Teia Musa dedit.

Carmina Quis potuit tuto legisse Tibulli?

Vel tua, cujus opus Cynthia sola fuit?

Quis potuit lecto durus discedere Gallo?

Et mea nescio quid carmina dulce sonant.

Ovid. de Remed. Amor.

• Negemus omnia: comburamus annales: ficta hæc esse dicamus: quidvis denique potius quam deos res humanas curare, fateamur. *Cicer. de Divinat. L. 1.*

Christian Miracles considered. 125

us *sincere* relations, on account of some that do *not*? Why, in short, must we reject the interposition of God on *every* occasion, because we would not introduce it on those which are *mean* and *unworthy*?

But if after all this, it should still be asked, to what end then were all these things invented? the Question might with much greater reason be retorted; To what end were they wrought? What doctrine were they to introduce, and and what practice to establish? What tendency had they in their nature to promote in general the welfare of *Men*? Or what dignity in their circumstances to make them thought worthy of the *care* and interposition of God?

To

• *Cicero* has argued in this manner against them and shewed their vanity in various lights.

Scilicet, si Jupiter ista significaret, tam multa frustra fulmina emitteret. Quid enim proficit, quum in medium mare fulmen jactat? quid cum in altissimos montes, quod plerumque fit? quid cum in desertas solitudines? Quid cum in earum gentium oras, in quibus hæc ne observantur quidem. *Cic. de Divin. L. 2.*

Quid autem volunt ea Dii immortales primum significantes, quæ sine interpretibus non possumus intelligere; deinde ea quæ cavere nequeamus. *Id. ibid.*

126 *The Heathen rejection of the*

To such questions as these it is certain no rational answer can be given; to the other no rational one can be wanting; they were such (as was intimated before) as were partly invented by the Superstitious themselves, and partly imposed on them by others; they were such as fell in with the fearful apprehensions of the *weak*, or the interested views of the *Cunning*; they were such, in short, as gratified the deep rooted prejudices of the *one*, or the inordinate appetite of gain in the *other*.

If a bare assertion of this point is not satisfactory, the truth of it may be confirmed by two memorable examples, and one of them the most *disastrous and deplorable*, that is recorded in story.

Eclipses, Comets, Monsters, &c. were generally ranked in the number of Prodigies, though all of them were manifestly owing to natural causes: these therefore wise and prudent men frequently made use of to the benefit of *themselves*.

Noctem minacem, et in Scelus arrepturam fors lenivit:
nam Luna claro repente cælo visa languescere: id miles
rationis ignarus omen præsentium accepit, &c.

Uten

Christian Miracles considered. 227

selves and the state, the superstitious to the destruction of both.

Amongst the former examples is *Drusus*, who, observing the influence that an Eclipse of the Moon had on his mutinous Army, seasonably fell in with the vulgar prejudices, and made by this means a stubborn and inflexible spirit bend to Chance, which before had obstinately resisted all the motives of Policy.

The latter example one could wish never to have existed; or if Mankind must receive some instructive lessons from the errors and calamities of former times, one could wish at least that they had happened to a less deserving Person than *Nicias*; whose excellent conduct and heroical resolutions, as described to us by "his two inimitable *Historians* in his last distressful circumstances, will make the most *unfeeling* and *uncompassionate* Reader lament the occasion of his untimely fall.

And

Utendum ea inclinatione Cæsar, et quæ casus obtulerat in sapientiam vertendum ratus, circumdare tentoria jubet, &c. *Tacit. Annal. lib. 1.*

* *Plut. in Nicia. Thucyd. Hist. L. 7.*

128 *The Heathen rejection of the*

And this he will certainly be more inclined to do, if he considers likewise the pious and benevolent disposition of *Nicias*, and that he undertook the *Sicilian Expedition* against both his judgment and his will; that though he did so, yet he boldly executed his Country's commands, and fought against the opinion of his Collegue, till no hopes were left: but one error ruined the good effects of all his Virtues; and when he was embarking his Forces, and was really favoured in that undertaking by an Eclipse of the Moon, too much Superstition made him conclude that the Omen was unlucky, and that this undertaking should be deferred to a more favourable season; but that favourable season never came, and the expectation of it ended, as it might reasonably be imagined, in the *total destruction* of his Army and himself.

It would be cruel to insult over the memory of this unfortunate Hero, and I believe it
by

Ὁ δὲ Νικίας ἄλλην ἔπεισε σιλήνης ἀναμένειν περίοδον, ὥσπερ ἐκ ἐυθδὸς θεασάμενος αὐτὴν ἀποκαθαρεῖσθαι, ὅτι τὸν σκιερὸν τόπον καὶ ὑπὸ τῆς γῆς ἀντεφραττόμενον παρῆλθε.

Plut. in Nicias

by this time appears that I have no such design; but that, if the subject would permit, I should be more inclined to *weep over*, than *upbraid* his misfortunes. — yet no subject can be of such importance as not to *stand still* on this affecting occasion, while we observe that it is quite impossible to read his fate without *painfully reflecting* how easily it might have been prevented; we cannot possibly see him so manfully struggling with his adverse fortune, and not at the same time *curse* the baneful influence of Superstition; we cannot, in short, hear him encouraging the miserable remains of his army with the strong assurance that the vengeance of Heaven had been already so excessive that it soon must cease, * without *crying out against him*, that Heaven was innocent, and that these signal Calamities were principally owing to ignorance of Nature and ignorance of God.

There

* Ἰκανὰ γὰρ τοῖς τε πολεμίοις εὐτύχηται, καὶ εἴτω θεῶ ἐκίφθοι ἐς-ρατέυσαι, ἀποχρώντως ἤδη τιτιμωρήμεθα.

Thucyd. Hist. L. 7.

Whoever would see the finest picture of a great man striving with misfortunes, may find it in *Plutarch* on this occasion.

Πολύων δὲ Δειῶν, &c. *Plut. in Nic. p. 540. Ed. fol. Xyland.*

130 *The Heathen rejection of the*

There are not many such examples as these in History, and indeed it is well there are not; Princes and Generals have for the most part made use of the contrary method, and have even *invented* some convenient Prodigies when *Nature* had not provided them; amongst which, that of *Themistocles* is remarkable, who perswaded the *Athenians* unanimously to leave the city by making the Priests assert that *Minerva* had gone before!

And if this was not the very rise and origin of Augury, with which, as ² *Cicero* informs us, *Romulus* had mingled some Superstition, yet it certainly was in after times its chief strength and support; and it *was drawn out or kept back* on

¹ Ἐνθα δὲ Θειμίστοκλῆς ἀπορῶν τοῖς ἀνθρωπίνοις λογισμοῖς προσάγειναι τὸ πλῆθος, ὥσπερ ἐν τραγωδίᾳ μηχανὴν αἶρας, σημεῖα δαιμόνια καὶ χρησμούς ἐπήγεον αὐτοῖς, &c.

Plut. in Themistoc.

² Et tamen credo Romulum, qui urbem auspicato condidit, habuisse opinionem, esse in providendis rebus augurandi scientiam. Errabat enim multis in rebus antiquitas, &c. *Cicer. de Divin. L. 2.*

³ *Jul. Obseq. lib. Prodigiorum.*

Polydor. Verg. Dialog. de Prodigis L. 3.

⁴ Quidam creduli, quidam negligentes sunt; quibusdam mendacium obrepit, quibusdam placet: illi non evitant, hi appetunt. *Senec. Nat. Quæst. L. 7.*

Christian Miracles considered. 131

on proper occasions to hinder or promote the proceedings of the State.

From hence therefore we may see how easily Superstition and cunning might give birth to most of the Prodigies that are collected into that formidable body by *Julius Obsequens*;* especially when we must yet join to these causes that idleness and inattention which is so natural to the generality of men: "All had rather believe than examine," says *Seneca*;^b and any considerable number of men, combined together to *support obstinately* an opinion, will run very little risque of a disappointment.^c

Add

* An ingenious Modern has carried this matter as far as ever it will go, when he affirms, that with half a dozen men, which he could persuade that the Sun did not make the day, he would undertake to propagate the opinion amongst whole Nations.*

This is a very hardy declaration, but yet it must be said that he has in some measure made it good; not indeed by his reasoning, but his want of it; and by being him-

* Donnez moi une demi douzaine de Personnes, à qui je puisse persuader que ce n'est pas le soleil qui fait le jour, je ne désespérerai pas que des nations entières n'embrassent cette opinion.

— The reason follows which will prove directly against himself, as there can be no better reason for his admitting the interposition of Demons in Magic, than the antiquity of it.

" Quelque ridicule que soit une pensée, il ne faut que trouver
" moyen

132 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Add still to this another very great and substantial fund of these Prodigies, which the passion of *marvellous* in the human breast can create; to which passion both Poets and Historians have *sometimes* entirely sacrificed the truth of things, and at *other times* have joined to it such an encrease of the wonderful, as if they chose rather to *astonish*, than *inform* the mind.

I cannot now consider at large that variety of wonders which might easily flow from this fruitful source of Superstition; let it suffice therefore to remark that even under the Gospel dis-

himself such an example, as he proposed to make. For though he was so averse to the influence of Dæmons over Oracles, that, though staunch to the Catholic cause where these Dæmons were wanted, he yet could condescend to epitomise the work of an Heretic against them; yet, pressed with a weak argument of *Moebius* on this head, he readily admits them again; and affirms that the Devil was undoubtedly concerned in Magic, though he was not in Oracles: † which is an opinion almost as
strange,

“moyen de la maintenir pendant quelque tems; la voilà qui
“devient ancienne, et elle est suffisamment prouvée.

Fontenelle, Histoire des Oracles. c. 11.

† Monsieur Van dale repondra ce qu' il jugera a propos; pour moi, je declare que sous le Nom d' Oracle je ne pretends point comprendre la Magie, dont il est indubitable que le Demon se mele: &c. Id. *Preface a l' Hist. des Oracles.*

dispensation, when one would naturally imagine that both this and the other source should fail, there are instances abundantly sufficient to confirm all that has been said: There are Countries which flourish under the light of religion and improvements of reason, where *wonder-working Reliques*^d and *gainful Impostures* are admitted; and there are grave Historians of Christian principles who have *turned into Prodigy* the simplest Events and most natural Transactions.^e

The^f Authors cited in the margin will afford an ample field to those who delight in excursions on *enchanted ground*: but that is not at present my case; I cannot help mentioning how-

strange, and indeed *more* inconsistent, than that which he engaged to spread; and makes one apt to imagine that his own half dozen men had mutinied in the progress of their undertaking, and were actually turned against him.

^d *Baillet, vies des Saints. Addison's Travels.*

Middleton's Letter from Rome.

^e *Clarendon's Hist. V. 1. Relation of the Duke of Bucks. Maimbourg, Histoire de Lutheranism, ad ann. 1547. Mezerai, Abregé Chronol. ad ann. 1610. Perefixe, Hist. d' Henry 4. Sandoval's Hist. of Charles 5, passim.*

^f *Gaspar Schott, Physic. Curios. Card. de Rerum Variet. Le Loyer de Spectris. Glanvil, Grosius, Thyreas. Boissardus. Bodinus. Pitseus in Galfredo &c.*

134 *The Heathen rejection of the*

however one Prodigy on this occasion, because it is so very like that celebrated one amongst the *Romans* before recited; it is said to have happened in that fruitful *Æra* of them, the Wars of the East, particularly in the Battle of *Iconium*, which the Christian Emperour gained without any loss on his side; which many attributed to the assistance of *St. George* and *St. Victor*, whose names were frequently called upon through the Army, and some asserted that they had seen them fighting before the Squadrons. *

But as this was only the common and idle report of an *heated* and *enthusiastic* multitude, we are assured further by the same Author, that the truth of the whole transaction was afterwards firmly established; and that a Knight of reputation,

* Ce qu' il y eut de plus merveilleux en cette victoire est que le Vainqueur ne fit presque aucune perte : ce que plusieurs attribuerent a la protection particuliere de *St. George* et de *St. Victor*, qu' on reclamoit ordinairement dans l' armée, et que quelques uns assuroient avoir vu combattre devant les Escadrons ; soit qu' il y eut en effet quelque chose d' extraordinaire &c.

Quoi qu' il en soit, il est certain qu' un Cavalier de reputation, et nullement Visionnaire appelle Louis de Hel-

Christian Miracles considered. 135

tation, and by no means a visionary, swore before the Emperour and the whole army, that he saw the two saints engaged in the heat of the Battle.

It does not appear that the *Roman Miracle*, though much like this in its nature, was so well attested as to its truth; and yet I suppose with some it will gain just as much credit, as that did with *Cicero*: the cool and reputable Knight will be looked upon as an *Impester*; and the Wars of the *East* will be thought no more to deserve the assistance of God, than the ravages and oppressions of the *Roman People*.

Having said thus much of prodigies in general I ought not to dismiss this subject without observing, what indeed should be very much

re-
Helfenstein, assura la meme chose a l'Empereur, et lui protesta devant toute l'armée sur son serment, et sur sa foi de Pelerin voue de St. Sepulchre, et de Croisé, qu'il avoit vu plus d'une fois St. George a la tête des escadrons tourner les ennemis en fuite; ce que fut apres confirmé par les Turcs memes, qui disoient avoir vu a la tête d' l' armée Chretienne, certaines troupes toutes vetues de blanc, que l'on ne trouvoit plus parmi les notres.

*Maimbourg, Histoire des Croisades. Liv. 5.
Bayle, pensées diverses &c. Vol. 1.*

136 *The Heathen rejection of the*

regarded, on it, that there is, as the Wise-man observes, *a time for all things*; that certain principles are *born and die* just as certain circumstances are proper to *cherish or suppress* them; of the truth of which these Prodigies and Oracles are indisputable proofs; *Italy* was the province of the *former*, *Greece* of the *latter*: the various governments it was split into, made frequent enquiries ofⁿ Oracles necessary; and the *Romans* thought their government so important, and so dear to the Gods, that nothing could be done in it without their assistance and direction.¹

This would not however hinder but that the *Romans* must have *some* Oracles, as well as the *Greeks* *some* Prodigies; this was not unlike to happen, as both of them sprang from two common Parents, Craft and Superstition; but the general reason above mentioned did prevail; and

ⁿ Quam vero Græcia coloniam misit in Æoliam, Joniam, Asiam, Siciliam, Italiam, sine Pythio, aut Dodonæo, aut Hammonis Oraculo? aut quod bellum susceptum ab eo sine consilio deorum est? *Cic. de Div. L. 1.*

¹ *Cicero. de Nat. Deor. L. 3. Aug. de Civ. Dei. L. 4. c. 9. Tertullian. Apolog. c. 25. Minuc. Fel. Octav.*

Roma est tam magna facta, nimirum hoc Jovis est, *Aug. de Civ. Dei, L. 1.*

Rome

Christian Miracles considered. 137

and the *Roman* Historians, we see, abound most with *Prodigies*; the *Grecian* with *Oracles*.

If we believe *Herodotus*^k indeed, there was one Nation exceeded them both, as pretending to more *Prodigies* than any other People in the world: these were the *Egyptians*: but *Herodotus* knew little of the *Romans*, otherwise perhaps he would have changed his opinion; if he would not, we are sure the *Egyptians* must have quitted themselves well, to have exceeded the *Romans* in this particular.

The mention of the *Egyptians* in this place may perhaps make some very naturally reflect on the multitude of real *Miracles* wrought by *Moses* amongst that people; and these there can be no possible reason to reject, as we have unerring Authority to convince us of the truth of

Rome se vantoit d'estre une ville sainte par sa foundation. Peu s'en fallut qu'elle ne crut Jupiter plus present dans le Capitol, que dans le Ciel.

Bossuet, Discours sur l'Hist. Univers.

^k Τέρατὰ τε πλεον (Αἰγυπτίοις) ἀνύστανται ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἅπασιν ἀνθρώποις. *Herodot. Euterpe. L. 28.*

138 *The Heathen rejection of the*

of them : but then that they were very little heard of amongst the Heathens is very probable from the circumstances of the *Israelites* during their *Egyptian* Bondage; or, if they were more heard of than we imagine, it is still almost certain that they would lose by degrees their *genuine lustre*, and be confusedly joined in process of time to the many *Impostures* of that nature.

And this is what we are expressly assured of in two very remarkable passages of ¹ *Apuleius* and ^m *Pliny*; the latter of whom ranks him with the *Egyptian* Magicians; and the former, being accused of Magic on account of his Marriage with *Prudentilla*, which was supposed to be contracted for the sake of gain, assures his Judge that this did not influence his choice at all; and that, if they found it did in the least, he was willing to give up his cause, and be reckoned amongst the *greatest and most infamous Magicians* that any age had produced : and

¹ *Reputate Vobiscum &c. Apulei. Apolog. Ed. Delph. p. 544.*

^m *Plin. N. H. L. 30. c. 1. Est et alia magices factio,*

^a *Mose, a Jamne, a Jotape Judæis pridem, sed multis millibus annorum post Zoroastrem.*

Christian Miracles considered. 139

and in this distinguished Class he gives *Moses* a very honourable place.

But besides these Miracles of *Moses*, I have likewise admitted one before, which was wrought to hinder the rebuilding of the Temple at *Jerusalem*: and if there be any other wrought amongst the Heathens, relating to the *Jewish* or *Christian* Affairs, or any amongst the Heathens themselves that is properly circumstanced, or properly supported, I shall readily acknowledge it.

I have now gone through this head; and the Reader will easily perceive what an influence it must have over the conduct of the Heathens in regard to the point we are maintaining; and if he is tired with following me through this tract of Wonders, he will at least have some obligation to me for not carrying him farther on.

I shall therefore for his sake throw the rest of the Heathen Miracles into the Common lumber, and pass over at once the whole circle of Wonder-workers in former times with this obvious reflection on the uncertainty of worldly things,

140 *The Heathen rejection of the*

things; That they were most of them once celebrated and distinguished Names in Story, but are now sunk into the lowest, and ranked with *Vulgar Mortals*.

If the Reader however would have any idea of the *frightful Travail* which he has escaped, and has the natural curiosity to know what these great Names were; they were those of ^a *Azonaces*, *Zoroaster*, and *Ostanes*; of ^o *Dardamus*, of ^p *Jotapes*, of *Jannes* and *Jambres*; of ^a *Orpheus*, ^r *Epimenides*, *Abaris* and ^r *Numa*; of ^r *Empedocles*, *Democritus*, ^a *Carinondas* and *Damigeron*; of ^r *Marcus*, *Melampus*, *Apuleius*, and ^r *Plotinus*; of *Manetho*, *Julian*, ^r *Armenius*, *Pamphilus*, *Belus*, *Bebulus*, &c. of all which some miraculous operations are reported; and some of them had likewise the additional splendour of being crowned *Magicians* and *Venerable Fathers* of their Art.

The

^a *Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 30. c. 1.* ^o *Id. ibid.* ^p *Id. ibid.*

^r *Le Loyer de Spectris.* ^r *Porphy. vit. Pythag.*

^a *Dionys. Halicarn. Rom. Antiq. L. 2.*

^r *Porphy. vit. Pyth. Plin. N. H. L. 2. c. 17.*

^a *Apul. Apolog.* ^r *Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 7. c. 33.*

^r *Naudé Apolog. c. 12.* ^r *Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 1.*

Christian Miracles considered. 141

The Reader however will, I hope, for this indulgence to him, be so favourable in his turn, as to allow me to select one of all this number for a purpose important to Christianity; it is *Apuleius*, of whom so many Miracles are reported, that, as the ^v Fathers assure us, he was, like *Apollonius*, set up in opposition to Christ.

But as none of his Miracles are delivered down to us by himself or others, we shall have little trouble on this account; He was accused indeed by the *Heathens* themselves of Magic, and made an apology on that occasion; but if we may guess at his *own* Wonders by those which he has recorded of ² *Meroe* and *Panthia*, they would have given us as little trouble if they had been extant.

It was not therefore for his *Miracles* that he was selected from this tribe of Impostors,
but

Two of these, namely, *Manetho* and *Julian* are said to have slighted all the Performances of *Apollonius*, in comparison of what they could do by Magic. *Naudé*, ubi supra.

² *Lactant. Div. Inst. L. 5. c. 3. Marcellin. ad August. Ep. 4. August. ad Marcellin. Ep. 5. Hieronym. in Psal. 81.*

³ *Apul. Metamorphos. L. 1. passim.*

142 *The Heathen rejection of the*

but for the *omission* of them ; which affords us a fair opportunity of shewing the absurdity of that conduct in such infidels as are incessantly calling for those Writings against Christianity which are lost ; and perpetually upbraiding us with those inexpugnable batteries which by *little arts and unfair practices* we have cunningly destroyed, or by length of time, and variety of of accidents, have most *fortunately* avoided.

Now there could not possibly be any objections of the Heathens so formidable to our religion, as such Miracles as were asserted to be superiour to those of *Christ* ; such were those of *Apollonius* and *Apuleius*, which appeared so considerable in the days of *Saint Austin*, that we find *Marcellinus* entreating him to confute that set of Men who publickly maintained this opinion. *

Now it happens that the relation of these Wonders of *Apuleius*, like some writings against Christianity, are lost ; and if those of *Apollonius* had

* Precator accesserim ut ad ea vigilantius respondere digneris, in quibus nihil amplius Dominum, quam alii homines facere potuerunt, fecisse vel gessisse mentiuntur.

Apol-

Christian Miracles considered. 143

had been lost too, they would constantly have been objected to us from the Infidel Quarter, and been looked upon as a *standing* and *indelible reproach* to the Christian Name. But, fortunately for us, the Miracles of *Apollonius*, the more extraordinary Person of the two, remain; and there is no possible room to suppose that they could receive any injury from the Writer of his life, who was so well enclined to support his pretensions, and encrease his fame: and yet we have just now seen what these Miracles were; either *poor* and *imperfect* copies of those of *Christ*, or else vain and idle Wonders mixed with mean and contemptible Tricks, and wrought for no great and important end.

As therefore we must necessarily conclude of the Miracles of *Apuleius*, that they could not possibly be hurtful to the Christian Cause; so we may reasonably conclude of the objections which are lost; *both* were indeed thought sufficient by the *Heathens* to overthrow

the
Apollonium siquidem suum nobis et Apuleium aliosque
magicæ artis homines in medium proferunt, quorum
majora contendunt extitisse miracula.

Marcellin. ad Aug. Ep. 4.

144 *The Heathen rejection of the*

the system of our faith; but from a certain knowledge of the Weakness of the *one*, we must greatly suspect the same Weakness in the *other*.

And I am much mistaken if the zeal of those *Christians*^c, who caused them to be burnt, was not in this case, as it is in many others, a *zeal without knowledge*; and there never could, in all probability, arise so much harm to our Religion from the real existence of those
Writ-

^c *Holsten. Dissert. de vit. et Script. Porphyrii.*

Loyd's Chronolog. account of Pythagoras.

Adeo ut Cyrillum inde ab illo consilio, ipsos nempe Juliani libros suis contra eum disputationibus inferendi, neuti-
quam revocare potuerit ea, quæ paucis demum ab ejus morte annis, nempe ccccxlx a Theodosio Juniore prodiit, quæque ab initio ferme Justiniani Codicis legitur, constitutio quæ sancitur, ut *omnia quæcunque Porphyrius sua pulsus insania, aut quivis alius contra religiosum Christianorum cultum conscripserit, apud quemcunque inventa fuerint, igni mancipentur*; ac similiter a Justiniano Novell. xii. cap. i. Qua sicut Nestorii, ita Severi scripta, ne penes aliquem Christianum maneant, prohibentur; et quidem addita ejus rei ratione, *quia Prædecessoribus nostris Imperatoribus, in suis Constitutionibus visum est statuere similia his quæ dicta sunt et Scripta a Porphyrio in Christianos*. Spanheim. *Præfat. in Julian. et Cyrill. Oper.*

Christian Miracles considered. 145

Writings, as from the many Suspicions that such treatment of them must occasion.^d

^d Much in the same manner does *Arnobius* argue in a like case against the *Heathens*, who were for abolishing at once such Writings as promoted Christianity.

Intercipere Scripta, et publicatam velle submergere lectionem, non est Deos defendere, sed veritatis testificationem timere. *Arnob. cont. Grut. L. 3.*

K

CHAP.



CHAP. V.

Of the Influence which the Intercommunity of Gods must have on the Conduct of the Heathens.

HOW far the last mentioned truth prevailed amongst the Heathens, and what part of them were like to come at the knowledge of it, is not easy to tell; but we know, that the suspicion of it must be much encreased by the next thing we are to consider, which is the intercommunity of Gods.

And no doubt but this, and, what of consequence followed it, the admission of that whole train of ceremonies which belonged to their Worship, and that variety of Prodigies which were ascribed to their power, had not only a tendency to weaken in their minds the belief of Miracles in general, but likewise to shake, and in the end to demolish the whole fabric of their Religion.

Christian Miracles considered. 147

Simplicity of Worship is what naturally belongs to the Creator of the Universe, and though this might be a truth, which only the wisest might perceive in its utmost extent; yet in general Men could not but at first admire, and afterwards *suspect*, or *weakly believe* this endless addition of one Religion to another.

If we only consider the effects of that seemingly simple principle, *if there are Gods, therefore Divination*,^a which Cicero mentions at the beginning of his Work, and which by the objection of *Quintus* seems to be a principle of many; it will be amazing to see what a variety of Superstition it will occasion,

Hence Oracles, Sybils, Prophets, and Astrologers; hence ^b Companies of Aruspices, Auspices, Augurs; hence ^c Pythonists, Ventriloquists, Magicians, Enchanters; hence Dreams, Presages, Omens, Prodigies; hence Divination

^a Si Dii sint, ergo Divinatio. *Cic. de Div.* L. 1.

^b Godwin. *Antiq. Rofini Antiquit.* L. 3, c. 1.

^c Boissardus de Divinatione et Magicis Præstigiis.

Peucer. de Præcip. Divin. Generib.

Del Río, Disquisit. Mag. L. 4.

148 *The Heathen rejection of the*

in short through universal Nature, by ^d Fire, by Water, by Earth, and by Air.

If therefore all this incumbrance must arise to the Religion of any one Country by the admission of this principle only ; ^e and if, of consequence, the Professors of it would be apt to fluctuate ^f in their belief of what had been so absurdly joined to it; what shall we say farther, when we see them readily acquiescing in whatever Chimæra the fancy of a Poet, or the visions of a Philosopher could invent; when

^d Varro apud Isidor. L. 8. Plin. N. H. L. 3. c. 2.

^e A learned Author among the moderns reckons up no less than eighty different Greek Compounds of the word *μάρτυς*; which together with those of *μαρτυρία*, which both proceed from *μαρτυρεω*, would, he says, make no inconsiderable vocabulary.

Hinc tot sunt divinandi genera ab hominibus excogitata, ut si nomina eorum paginæ huic infarcire vellem, ultra octoginta Græca adducerem vocabula pleraque composita cum nomine *μάρτυς*: prorsus ut si quis Grammaticus (ut sunt in his rebus curiosi) ex me quæreret quodnam in Græca lingua, quæ omnium maxime compositis abundat, vocabulum sit quod plurimas admittat compositiones; dicerem verbum est *μαρτυρεω*; hinc enim duo descendunt nomina *μαρτυρία* et *μάρτυς*, quorum composita non contemnendum vocabularium constituere possent.

Werenfelsius de Superstitione in rebus Physicis. S. 7.

Christian Miracles considered. 149

when not only an ^a *Homer* and an *Hesiod* of their own Country, but an *Hermes* and *Pboroneus* of another; when *Orpheus*, *Danaus*, *Cadmus*, ^b *Cecrops*; when companies of *Ægyptians*, *Phœnicians*, and *Tuscans*; when the Wanderers, in short, and Vagabonds of the World were suffered to unload their *superstitious lumber* in the most sacred places of their Temples?

The *Tuscans*,^c indeed, properly influenced the *Roman* affairs, of whom we may now say, though ^d *Quintus* would not, *in extis totam* E-

^e Excellent on this occasion is the observation of *Diogenes*,

Ὡς ὅταν μὲν ἴδῃ κυβερνήτας ἐν τῷ βίῳ, καὶ ἰατροὺς καὶ φιλοσόφους, συνετώτατον τῶν ζώων εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον. ὅταν δὲ πάλιν Ὀνειροκρίτες, καὶ μάντιες, καὶ τὰς προέχουσας τέτοις, ἰδὲν ματαιότερον νομίζειν ἄνθρωπον. *Lasti. L. 6.*

^f *Homer* and *Hesiod* settled the *Greek* Theogeny according to *Herodotus*.

Οὗτοι δὲ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες Θεογονίην Ἕλλησι, καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες, καὶ τιμὰς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες, καὶ εἶδεα αὐτῶν σημνῆντες. *Herodot. L. 2.*

^g *Herodot. ibid. Pausan. in Arcad. Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 6.*

^h *Dionys. Halicarn. Rom. Ant. L. 9. Liv. L. 1. Tertull. de Spectaculis. Cicero de Divinat. L. 1. Id. de Harusp. resp. Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 7. the last calls Etrurja, Genetrix & Mater Superstitionis.*

ⁱ *Cicero de Divinat. Lib. 1.*

150 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Etruriam delirasse: so that it was in vain that ¹ *Romulus* so carefully rejected in the Institution of his Religion all the Fables related of the *Græcian* Gods, whilst he admitted such a *teeming* and *prolific madness* as we have proved *Divination* to have been.

It was no wonder therefore that in process of time these Fables should prevail in *Rome*, as they did in *Greece*; since they found so many absurdities that were so nearly related to them; and though the *Roman* State, following probably the intentions of its Founder, did not easily (as the same ^m *Dionysius* informs us) admit any

¹ Τὸς δὲ παραδομένοις περὶ αὐτῶν μύθοις, ἐν οἷς βλασφημίαι τινες εἰσὶ καὶ αὐτῶν, ἢ κατηγορίαι, πονηρὰς καὶ ἀνωφελεῖς καὶ ἀισχυράς ὑπολαβὼν εἶναι, καὶ ἔχ' ὅτι θεῶν, ἀλλὰ ὅδ' ἀνθρώπων ἀγαθῶν ἀξίους, ἀπαντας ἐξέβαλε, καὶ παρεσκευάσεν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους κράτιστα περὶ θεῶν λέγειν καὶ φρονεῖν. *Dionys. Halicarn. L. 2.*

^m *Dionys. Halicar. L. 2. c. 19.*

^a This is one of those few points which the learned *Mr. Warburton* has fairly got through to the satisfaction of all parties, and without the least murmur from any of his numerous opposers.

Warburton's Divine Legation, Vol. I. page 290.

Herbert de Relig. Gentil. c. 11.

^{*} Yet see how magnificently *Cæcilius* in *Minucius Felix* speaks on this occasion; and what different effects he
im-

Christian Miracles considered. 151

any Foreign Worship; yet ^aby readily allowing them all, their City was filled with such a variety of Superstition, as must necessarily tend to the encrease rather than the diminution of the Suspicion we are now considering.^o

For when all Men saw, that, excepting a burden of Ceremonies, that constituted the religion of the state, every other sort of religion was an indifferent thing; when they found it left to their own choice, if they disturbed not the former, what Gods to worship, and what temples to frequent; when the different Nations of the World came to *Rome*, as to a *General Mart*, where every ones inclinations were sure to

imputes to the number of Divinities worshipped at *Rome*.

Inde adeo per universa imperia, provincias, oppida videmus singulos sacrorum ritus gentiles habere, et Deos colere municipes; ut Elusinos, Cererem; Phrygas, Magnam Matrem; Epidaurios, Æsculapium; Chaldaeos, Belum; Astartem, Syros; Dianam, Tauros; Gallos, Mercurium; Uiversa, Romanos. — Sic eorum potestas, et auctoritas totius orbis ambitus occupavit; sic Imperium suum ultra solis vias, et ipsius Oceani limites propagavit; dum exercent in armis virtutem religiosam, dum urbem muniunt sacrorum religionibus, castis virginibus, multis honoribus, ac nominibus Sacerdotum: &c.

Minuc. Fel. Octa.

152 *The Heathen rejection of the*

to be gratified, as every sort of superstition abounded; when, besides all this, many if not most of these religious institutions were light and fantastical in their nature, or hurtful and destructive in their consequences; when they were such as *corrupted*, rather than *mended* the heart; when the ceremonies they required of their Votaries were indecent, and the practice was scandalous: — When they were altogether unworthy, in short, both of the Society that protected them, and even the patronage of the Gods to whom they belonged: * —

I

* *August. de Civ. Dei. L. 8. c. 13. Alexand. ab Alex. cap. ult. Tertull. de Idol. L. 1. Id. de Pudicit. Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 5. passim. Id. L. 7.* The last mentioned Author has chastly and judiciously observed, that though the nature of his work required him to examine the whole series of Religious Rites and Mysteries amongst the *Heathens*, yet they were in general so scandalous that he chose to pass over many, for fear of being himself polluted even by the relation.*

By this means he did not only avoid the temptation of relapsing into Paganism, of which in his unconfirmed State of Christianity † there was some considerable danger; but he likewise escaped that harsh censure from posterity, which *Juvenal* in a like case has received; who has been accused by a rough Modern of writing more like a † Pimp than

Christian Miracles considered. 153

I say when this was the case, no wonder that Religion and all its appendages should be brought into contempt; no wonder that men should discover as well the *weakness* of the Gods, as the *irregularity* of their Worship; no wonder that the Miracles of an *Isis* and the *Isiaca* should be rejected together; no wonder that even the State should be forced sometimes to interpose, and banish from its members such *sanctified* Iniquity, and such *venerable* Corruption.^a

And

than a Poet, and by the obscenity of his relations teaching the very Vices he condemned.

* Postulat quidem magnitudo materiæ, atque ipsius defensionis officium, ut similiter cæteras turpitudinum species persequamur; Vel quas prodant antiquitatis historiæ, vel mysteria illa continent sancta, quibus initis nomen est, et quæ non omnibus vulgo, sed paucorum taciturnitatibus tradi licet: sed sacrorum innumeri ritus, atque affixa deformitas singulis corporaliter prohibet universa nos exequi: quinimo ut verius exprimamus, quibusdam nos ipsi consilio et ratione deflectionibus; ne dum explicare contendimus cuncta, expositionis ipsius contaminationibus polluamur. *Arnab. cont. Gent. L. 5.*

† *Dupin, Biblioth. des Auteurs Eccles. V. 3.*

Bayle, Dict. Hist. et Crit. Voc. Arnob.

† *Collier's Essay on the Profaneness and Immorality of the Stage.*

a There is a most horrid account of the enormities of the *Bacchanalia* in *Livy*, much exceeding all that has been

154 *The Heathen rejection of the*

And that this was really the case both of the whole Community and Individuals, we learn from the authorities of *Cicero* and *Livy*: the latter of whom expressly assures us, that the Government more than once restrained the extravagancies of Foreign Worship; and the former is intimating to us in almost every page that his Country Religion was vain.

Neither does he intimate this only of those Foreign modes of Worship, which, as we have just now been mentioning, were only permitted at *Rome*; but likewise most incontestably confutes that whole species of Superstition, which belonged to their Polity, and was interwoven with their State.

He does, indeed, make frequent Apologies for this, and assures us that no one is more faithfully attached to the Religion established by

been hitherto said. — *Nec unum genus noxæ, Stupra promiscua ingenuorum fæminarumque erant; sed falsi testes, falsa signa, testimoniaque, et indicia ex eâdem officina exhibant. Venena indidem intestinæque cædes: multa dolo, pleraque per vim audebantur, &c.* And when these were forbid, the Consul intimates in his Speech, that the State had done the same thing many times before. *Liv. Hist. L. 39. c. 8, 9, 10.*

Christian Miracles considered. 155

by his Ancestors than himself; nay at the very same time that he is entering with vigour on the confutation of the whole art of Sooth-saying in general, which he shews in effect to be so very absurd that it was a wonder this Species of Diviners could keep their Countenance when they saw each other: — I say at this very time he begins his conference with an express testimony, that, however severe he might be on this part of Divination, “yet it was his real opinion, that it ought still to be revered for the sake of the common Wealth, and the established Religion.”

From these professions and this conduct of Cicero, which was common to the Heathen Philosophers in general, we may fairly judge, that if the reason just mentioned had been unknown, yet it was as easy for his Countrymen to make the same conclusion about the vanity

* *Liv. Hist.* ubi supra.

* *Ciceron. Oper. Philosophic.* passim.

* *Cicero de Nat. Deorum.* L. 1. c. 26.

Id. de Divinat. L. 2. S. 24.

* Ut ordiar ab Aruspicinâ, quam ego reipublicæ causâ, communisque religionis colendam censeo.

Cicero de Divinat. L. 2. S. 12.

156 *The Heathen rejection of the*

vanity of these Religious pretensions as himself; or if they had not made the conclusion; yet we see, he shewed them the way, wrote to them in a language they all understood, and, what is more, in a manner they all admired.

Now whoever considers that multitude of wonders which were universally ascribed to the Art of Divination, must necessarily conclude, that they must be cut up *with it*; and that being a feeble and enervate Offspring even while their Parent flourished, they could not possibly subsist after her fall.

But beside that the Miracles which belonged to this Art were exceedingly numerous, they were likewise the best supported of any that the *Romans* pretended to; not only as they made part of their Polity and Constitution; but as this Polity and Constitution were looked upon as sacred and important things, and were peculiarly under the inspection and ^w patronage of the Gods.

We

▼ Mihique ita persuasi, Romulum auspiciis, Numam sacris constitutis fundamenta jecisse nostræ civitatis; quæ nunquam profecto sine summa placatione Deorum immortalium tanta esse potuisset. *Cic. de N. D. L. 3. c. 2,*

Christian Miracles considered. 157

We have observed something before of the singular pride of the Roman people in regard to the dignity of their state; and we cannot wonder that this pride should have as singular effects, and make them apt to conclude, that if their state was neglected, nothing else could be worthy of the interposition of heaven.

If once therefore those excellent books of divination composed by *Cicero* had been read and believed by the Roman People; this would have occasioned such a *chasm* in Miracles as would almost have required the joint assistance of the *Dii majores* to have filled: and as these treatises were written at a time when the other causes arising from the jumble of absurd and impious religions conspired with it; this would have encreased the Chasm to such an *enormous* size; that, as it formerly happened in the case of *Pluto*, it would have poured in the light upon the darkest minds, and even *astonished* them with day.

And

Ἔδδειςεν δ' ὑπέρβηεν ἄραχ' ἐνέρων Ἀϊδωνεύς,

Δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἄλτο, καὶ ἴαχε. μὴ οἱ ὑπερθε

Γαῖαν ἀναρρήξειε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων.

Hom. Iliad. L. T. L. 61. Ec.

158 *The Heathen rejection of the*

And it may very reasonably be asked why this did not really happen, especially as these books of *Cicero* were so excellently written, and on a subject the most interesting, the most curious, and the most important that could possibly be imagined.

This will deserve some answer, especially as the conduct of *Cicero* is here, as in many other places, mysterious enough: it should seem probable on some accounts that *Cicero* did not design these books for publick use, but only for the inspection of a few; such perhaps as laughed, as much as he did, at the religion of their country, but had not methodised their thoughts about it, nor reduced it to a system: thus when he begins the confutation of soothsaying, which he tells his brother was useful to the state, he adds, *but as we are alone, we may* *search*

* Sed soli sumus, licet verum exquirere sine invidia, mihi præsertim de plerisque dubitanti. *Cic. de Div. L. 2. c. 12.*

* See his declarations to this purpose *De Nat. Deor. p. 52. 93. 247, 248. De Divin. p. 179. 223, 227. &c. Edit. Davies.*

* Cumque omnis populi Romani religio in sacra, et auspicia divisa sit, tertium adjunctum sit, si quid prædictionis causa, &c. *Cic. de Nat. Deo. L. 3.*

Christian Miracles considered. 159

search into the truth without offence; and the probability of this opinion still is increased by those numerous intimations dispersed through his philosophical works, that he should be very unwilling to contribute any thing to the overthrow of a * religion, of which divination made so considerable a part *.

But yet for all this we find him elsewhere asserting, and especially in the conclusion of his work, that the chief merit of his philosophical enquiries consisted in freeing himself and his countrymen from the burden of superstition which had so long oppressed them; and least we should not know precisely which of his treatises were like to contribute most to this important end, he tells us they were chiefly those of the nature of the Gods, and divination.*

Nei-

* Explodatur ergo hæc quoque somniorum divinatio una cum cæteris: nam ut vere loquamur, superstitio fusa per gentes oppressit omnium fere animos, atque hominum imbecillitatem occupavit: quod et in iis libris dictum est, qui sunt de natura Deorum: et hac disputatione id maxime egimus: multum enim et nobismet ipsis et nostris profuturi videbamur, si eam funditus sustuliffemus. *Cic. de Divin. L. 2.*

Neither can the word *Nostri* in the sentence just quoted be reasonably confined to such amongst his acquaintance or countrymen, who by their superiour parts and station in life could not be supposed to make an ill use of his doctrines; since this is both an unusual sense of the word in his writings, and besides could not be very applicable to them, as they had in all probability little occasion for his instruction.

Cato many years before had observed what has been just now mentioned, that he wondered how two sooth-sayers could meet without laughing; which shews what they then thought of that art themselves; and *Cicero* confirms this observation in several places of his philosophical works, and tells us, that the science of augury was retained more for the sake of religion, and the use it was of to the state^c than

^c Veritas auspiorum spreta est, species tantum retenta. *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. 2.

More particularly, Retinetur autem ad opinionem vulgi, et ad magnas utilitates reipublicæ, mos, religio, disciplina, jus augurum, Collegii auctoritas. *Cic. de Div.* L. 2.

^d Quis negat augurium disciplinam esse? divinationem nego. *Id. ib.*

Christian Miracles considered. 161

than that it had really any force or efficacy in itself.

This observation will help us in some measure, to reconcile the contradictory declarations of *Cicero*: The 'augury then in his treatises is frequently considered in a double light, either as consisting of certain rites and ceremonies, that belonged to the state, or as an art that had in effect the real knowledge of futurity; the first of these was all that was necessary for the soundest believer of his country religion to admit; the last was thrown amongst the whole tribe of Philosophers as a common object of contention.

It is therefore no wonder that on this occasion the conduct of *Cicero* should have such different appearances; since, making use of the freedom that in this case was granted, he rejected as a *Philosopher* one part of divination, whilst

• Sed primum auspicia videamus: difficilis auguri locus ad contradicendum: Marso fortasse, sed Romano facillimus: non enim ii sumus Augures, qui avium reliquorumve signorum observatione futura dicamus.

Cic. de Divin. L. 2. l. 33.

L

whilst as a *lover of his Country* he embraced the other; nay he embraced it with such a degree of esteem and veneration himself, that he thought those worthy of the *last punishment* who did not; nor had he any compassion on those two unfortunate Consuls, whose untimely deaths were principally owing to the neglect of this institution.^f

As this therefore was the case with Cicero, it is no wonder to see him so *tender* on this subject,

^f Nec vero non omni supplicio digni P. Clodius, L. Junius Brutus Consules qui contra auspicia navigarunt: Parendum enim fuit religioni, &c. Id. ib.

^g Soli sumus, &c.

^h Much the same answer as this must be given to that strange passage in his second book of Laws, where he needlessly gives his opinion about the efficacy of Divination, and where every thing advanced in the work we have been considering is actually unsaid.

Divinationem, quam Græci *μαντιαν* adpellant, efficeo; et hujus hanc ipsam partem quæ est in avibus cæterisque signis disciplinæ nostræ: quod, cum summos Deos esse concedamus, eorumque mente mundum regi, et eorundem benignitatem hominum consulere generi, et posse nobis signa rerum futurarum ostendere, non video cur esse divinationem negem. Sunt autem ea quæ posui, ex quibus id, quod volumus, efficitur et cogitur. Jam vero permultorum exemplorum et nostra est plena Respublica, et omnia regna

subject, whenever it was mentioned; the fixed and settled principle of its utility to the state ran constantly in his head, even while he was endeavouring to *confute* it; so that the words to *Quintus* just now recited, in which the principal difficulty lies, seem rather to be *mechanical*, and to flow from a heart *fully possessed* with this important truth, than to mean that he would not have spoke them in public; for which, according to his own declaration, this work was chiefly designed.^h

But
regna omnesque populi, cunctaque gentes augurum prædictis multa incredibiliter vera cecidisse: neque enim Polydi, neque Melampodis, neque Mopsi, neque Amphirai, neque Chalcantis, neque Heleni, tantum nomen fuisset, neque tot rationes id ad hoc tempus retinuisent, Arabum, Phrygum, Lycaonum, Cilicum, maximeque Pisidarum, nisi vetustas ea certa esse docuisset: nec vero Romulus noster auspicato urbem condidisset, neque Atti Nævi memoria floreret tam diu, nisi hi omnes multa ad veritatem et mirabilia dixissent. Sed dubium non est quin hæc disciplina, et ars augurum evanuerit jam et vetustate et negligentia. Itaque neque illi assentior qui hanc scientiam negat unquam in nostro Collegio fuisse, neque illi qui esse etiam nunc putat: Quæ mihi videtur apud majores fuisse duplex, ut ad Reipublicæ tempus nonnunquam, ad agendi consilium sæpissime pertineret.

Cic. de Legibus. l. 2.

I doubt not but the ingenuous Reader will think this

164 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But 2dly. Though from all this there is great reason to suppose that these books were intended for public use, yet as the art of printing was not then invented, they would not be so quickly and so universally spread as at present; this would not however hinder them from being spread; but there was a third thing that would hinder them from having such an effect as the question supposes, and that was the principles and dispositions of the Roman People.

The same veneration that *Cicero*, who wrote these treatises, had for his religion, the same would those have who read them; at least the wiser and more intelligent part, as we learn from the profound secrecy of the Augurs for so many years, though the vanity and futility of their art had been so plainly detected.

But declaration extremely odd, but he will be more used to such sort of conduct in the Heathens as we go along; in the mean time, if he should not altogether acquiesce in the solution of it already given, he may reflect that, as the books of *Divination* were written after those of *Laws*,* it was not impossible but that *Cicero* might grow wiser as he advanced in years, and actually change his opinion;

* *Turneb. Argument. in M. T. Cic. Lib. de Legibus.*

Christian Miracles considered. 165

But what the *wiser part* saw through, the *vulgar* would not; and what the *former sort*, through motives of interest and policy, professed still to believe, the *latter* would do in reality: and the reason of this is, that, besides the great inability of the lower sort of people in general to judge of these things, the *Romans* had a reason that influenced themselves in particular.

No people in the world had ever been educated with such a zeal to their Country, and attachment to the State as they; this principle was constantly instilled into their minds from their earliest years, and was encouraged, as they grew up, by the properest motives and rewards; which method, kept up and maintain-

ed

or if he should not like this supposition, he may believe, what from this relation seems to be probable, that *Cicero* only speaks of that sort of Divination, which was artificial, and required knowledge and experience to bring it to perfection; in this sense it was, (as he calls it,) an art or discipline that once flourished by the care and industry of its Professors, but was now by their negligence worn out, and of no effect: and all this he might admit consistently with what is advanced in the second book of Divination.

166 *The Heathen rejection of the*

ed for a long series of years, had made this love as it were *natural* and *unconstrained*, actuating all their endeavours, and giving birth to their designs.

And as we frequently see them engaging on this motive in the most *extravagant actions*, so it is no wonder that the same should prompt them to the most *extravagant belief*: the truth is, that in the former case the desire of liberty was so *wild*; and in the latter, their zeal to the government was so great; that their conduct, upon the whole, was more *Enthusiasm* than judgement, and more *Mechanism* than reason.

Add to this, what *Quintus* observes in defence of this subject, the authority of all nations both barbarous and civil; that of their ¹ Ancestors, of Philosophers, of Poets, and Lawgivers; by whom in this case, as in all others, the multitude would be directed; and as they at first acquired their notions of Religion

¹ Quid est igitur cur dubitandum sit, quin sint ea, quæ disputavi, verissima; si ratio mecum facit, si eventa, si populi, si nationes, si Græci, si barbari, si majores etiam

Christian Miracles considered. 167

gion from *men* and not from *books*; so they would afterwards rather retain them by the authority of the *former*, than part with them by the perusal of the *latter*.

I might illustrate all this, if there was occasion, by some parallel instances of modern times, as well as inforce it with many other reasons, some of which will be seen in the next Chapter; but there is less necessity for this now, as I have been all along supposing, that both these books and this religion must in some measure influence the people's minds.

As to the former, if they were designed to be made public, which was probably the case, many would read them; if to be private, much of them would transpire: in neither case indeed would the people receive any conviction from the books themselves, as reading and reflexion was not their employment: — But as it is impossible for Men, who are perswaded of the

am nostri, si denique hoc semper ita putatum est, si summi Philosophi, si Poetæ, si sapientissimi viri, qui respublicas constituerunt, qui urbes condiderunt?

Cic. de Divin. lib. 1.

the falsity of an opinion, always to be on their guard against expressing any dislike of it; and as it is the nature of the Multitude, and those who are any ways dependent quickly to *catch and imbibe* the principles of their superiours; it would naturally happen in process of time that the *one* would discover the secret, which the *other* could not altogether keep.

And as the same reasoning will hold likewise in regard to the Religion of their Country; and they would besides in some instances be able of themselves to judge of its vanity; they would on all these accounts have a less veneration for *it*, as well as *those miracles* which were constantly joined to it, in whatever shape it appeared,

How *far*, indeed, and in what *measure and proportion* all this influenced the People's minds is impossible for us at this distance of time to discover; as well because it seems to be the foible of Historians to be always aggravating the

* *Juven. Sat. 2.* The Verses above cited have no manner of propriety on any other supposition than that which we have mentioned: they come in at the conclusion of a Satyr which inveighs against all the vices of a luxurious

Christian Miracles considered. 169

the vices of their own times, and commending the virtues of the preceding; as because it is hard to determine the *exact growth* of any principle, either in communities or individuals.

We know, however, what is of the greatest consequence for us to know, that there was a sensible difference in the principles of the people, in proportion as these notions might be supposed to exert themselves; since the Satyrists, whose chief business it is to censure the vices of the times, do frequently by this means record to us their genius and disposition; and in reading these we find that *Juvenal* has vehemently inveighed against some sorts of crimes which *Horace* has not; amongst which the prevailing infidelity of his age is not the least remarkable.

* *Esse aliquos Manes, et subterranea regna,
Et Contum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,
Atque una transire vadum. tot millia Cymba;
Nec Pueri credunt, nisi qui nondum ære lavantur.*

The
ous and impious age, as if they were designed not so much to fill up their number, as to account for their prevalence; and as if the general corruption of practice could not well arise but from this general corruption of principle: and that this was the probable design of *Juvenal* in
men-

The Reader however will not, I am persuaded, interpret all this according to the letter; but stripping it of all those aggravating circumstances which here, as in other places, the fiery and impetuous spirit of *Juvenal* has added, will conclude from it, what indeed ought only to be concluded, that these principles concerning Religion, prevailed *more* in his times, than they had done in the *preceding*.

But there is so remarkable a piece of History, in relation to this affair, conveyed down to us by *Arnobius*, and it is so illustrious an instance

mentioning them here, appears farther from the lines immediately following.

*Sed tu vera puta. Curius quid sentit, et ambo
Scipiadae? quid Fabricius, manesque Camilli?
Quid Cremerae Legio, et Cannis consumta juventus,
Tot bellorum animae, quoties hinc talis ad illos
Umbra venit? cuperent lustrari, siqua darentur
Sulphura cum tædis, et si foret humida laurus.*

Id. ibid.

¹ Quem quidem locum (this related to the number and different sexes of the Gods) plene jamdudum homines pectoris vivi tam Romanis literis explicavere quam Græcis; et ante omnes Tullius Romani disertissimus generis, nullam veritus impietatis invidiam, ingenuè, constanter, et liberè quid super tali opinione sentiret pietate cum

Christian Miracles considered. 171

stance of the effects which *Cicero's* writings had in process of time on the hearts of his Countrymen, that it could scarce have been more to our purpose, if it had been written with design to fix the point in question: the Original is quoted at large in the Margin, and the purport of it is this; that the Heathens themselves perceived at last too plainly the manifest ill tendency of *Cicero's* philosophical disputations; that they had in effect unhinged the faith of his Countrymen, and shook the credit of their Religion; that they were even of a peice with the Christian arguments against the

cum majore monstravit. A quo si res sumere judicii veritate conscriptas, non verborum luculentias pergeretis; perorata esset et hæc causa, nec secundas (ut dicitur) actiones nobis, ut infantibus, postulare. Sed quid aucupia verborum, splendoremque sermonis peti ab hoc dicam, cum sciam esse non paucos, qui averfentur et fugiant libros de hoc ejus, nec in aurem velint admittere lectionem opinionum suarum præsumpta vincentem? cumque alios audiam mussitari indignanter, et dicere, oportere statui per senatum, aboleantur ut hæc scripta quibus Christiana religio comprobetur, et vetustatis opprimatur auctoritas? Quinimo si fiditis exploratum vos dicere quicquam de Diis vestris, erroris convincite Ciceronem; temeraria et impia dictitare refellitote, redarguite, comprobate. *Arnob. Cont. Gent. lib. 3.*

172 *The Heathen rejection of the*

the Gentile Superstition ; and so plainly supported the cause of Christ, that, in the opinion of many, they deserved utterly to be abolished.

There will be little occasion, after so peculiar a testimony as this, to make any farther enquiry into the matter at present before us ; and therefore with it I beg leave to conclude this Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

*Of the influence which the Impositions
of Oracles must have over the Conduct
of the Heathens.*

THE business of *Oracles* comes next into consideration; and the various illusions and impositions of these, which men in all parts of the World had sometimes experienced, would naturally give them a disgust to all supernatural Operations, and make them apt to suspect that if they really were deceived in one case, they might also in another. Nay rather, as the general face of things in relation to Oracles had a miraculous * appearance; as no uncommon preparations were necessary to approach them; as Days were set apart, and Fasts,

* *Pausanias in Bæoticis. Lucian. Pseudomant. Euseb. præp. Evang. L. 4. Plutarch. de Defect. Oracul. Herodot. L. 1. Strabo. L. 17. Virgil. Æneid. L. 6. Luc. L. 5. Banier, Mythol. et Fab. expliq. par l'Hist. Liv. 4.*

174 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Fasts, Sacrifices, and Lustrations were required, as to obtain some extraordinary Blessings; as a God was supposed to preside over the place, at whose approach the Temple trembled, and the Caverns resounded from their inmost recesses; as the *Pythia* grew furious by the instinct of the Divinity, was seized generally with Convulsions and sometimes with Death; ^b i.e. in short, as the chief business was Prodigy, and this Prodigy was often detected; it could not be, but that from hence men would stand much on their guard against all pretensions of this nature.

There will not, I suppose, be much occasion at this time of the world to prove at large what has been just now asserted; that sometimes at least the whole apparatus of Prodigies was the collusion of Priests; and that this

• *Plut. de Defect. Orac. Luc. Pharsal. L. 5.*

Numinis aut pena est mors immatura recepti,
Aut pretium quippe stimulo fluctuque furoris
Compages humana labat; pulsusque Deorum
Concutiunt fragiles animas.

• In dark places full of Caverns, Rocks, &c. as that of Trophonius. *Pausan. in Bæoticis.*

^a *Suid. in voc. Dodon.* • *Strabo. L. 17.*

^b *Demosthen. Orat. Philippic. Cic. de Divin. L. 2.*

Christian Miracles considered. 175

this collusion was sometimes discovered, the whole History of Oracles will not suffer us to doubt: — and of the truth of this, the very form and constitution of some of the Oracles themselves; * the speaking^d Oaks of Dodona, and consenting * Eye-brows of Hammon; the complaisance of one Oracle for * Philip, of another for * Alexander; their absolute refusal of * Answers at one time, and theirⁱ perplexed and ambiguous ones at another; but above all the scandalous Adventures which their Priests had engaged in, and especially that most *flagrantly wicked one* recorded at large by *Ruffinus*,^b will be ever most memorable examples.

If the Reader does not easily follow me in this rapid progress from Imposture to Impasture, he will readily perceive how the * Oaks of Dodona

* Plutarch. in Alexand. b. Plut. Quæst. Græc. 9.

ⁱ Cicer. de Divinati. L. 2.

^b Ruffin. Eccles. Hist. L. 3. c. 25.

Καὶ τὸ ἱερὸν τῶν περὶ τοὺς οὐρανούς, ἡμεῖς δὲ οὐκ ἔχοντες. Suid. ubi supra.

From whence it should seem, that the sound might likewise come from the tops of the Trees; which might easily be without discovery, when the Trees were covered with leaves, if they were not hollow; as the Grove of Dodona

176 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Dodona could speak, and the ^mStatue of *Hammon* could nod; when he is assured that both of them were hollow: and he will quickly lose his Veneration for the supposed Divinity of Oracles, when he knows, that the chastest and most distinguished Matrons of a populous and flourishing City, were called forth in their order by the pretended command of *Saturn*, to be subject to the lewd embraces of his degenerate Priest.ⁿ

Whether *Dodona* was so remarkable, according to that of *Virgil*,

— Cum jam glandes, atque arbuta sacrae
Deficerent Sylva, et victum *Dodona* negaret.

^m 'Ουκ ὥσπερ ἐν Δελφοῖς καὶ Βραγχιδαῖς τὰς ἀποθεσι-
πίσεις διὰ λόγων, ἀλλὰ νεύμασι καὶ συμβόλοις τὸ πλεον
ὥσπερ παρ' Ὀμήρῳ.

ⁿ Ἡ καὶ κυανέησιν ἀπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε κρονίων.

And yet for all this, we are assured in the very next sentence that this Oracle had the complaisance for *Alexander* to assure him, vivâ voce, that he was the Son of *Jupiter*; though this was a complaisance that was never less wanted than on that occasion; and *Alexander*, I dare say, would have been contented with the usual Nod of assent, and motion of the Eye-brows for the confirmation of so doubtful a matter. *Strabo*, lib. 17.

ⁿ Sacerdōs erat apud eos (*Alexandriæ* scilicet) *Saturni* Tyrannus nomine. Hic quasi ex responso numinis adorantibus in Templo nobilibus quibusque et primariis viris, quorum sibi matronæ ad libidinem placuissent, dicebat *Saturnum* præcepisse, ut uxor sua pernoctaret in Templo.

Tum

Christian Miracles considered. 177

Whether, indeed, the whole business of Oracles was altogether owing to the inventions of Men, and every Answer could be solved on this supposition only, as a very learned Author^o has laboured hard to prove; or whether it is necessary to call in the assistance of Demons, as most of the *Antient Fathers*, and some amongst the *Moderns* have endeavoured to shew: I say which ever of these Opinions be true, there will be little occasion at present to

ex-

Tum is qui audierat gaudens quod uxor sua dignatione numinis vocaretur, exornatam comptius mittebat ad Templum.

Tyrannus per occultos Subterraneos aditus intra ipsum Saturni simulacrum patulis irrepebat cavernis, &c. posteaquam vero quæ lubitum fuerat, vel ad consternationem majorem, vel ad libidinis incitamentum disseruisset Numen impurum; arte quadam linteolis obductis repente lumina extinguebantur universa. Tum descendens obstupæ factæ et consternatæ mulierculæ adulterii incum profanis commentationibus inferebat. Hæc cum per omnes miserorum Matronas longo tempore gererentur, &c.

Rufin. ubi supra.

• *Ant. Van-Dale de Oraculis Ethnicorum dissertationes duæ.*

• *Boissardus de Divinatione et Magicis Præstigiis. Balthus, Reponse a l'Histoire des Oracles. Moebius de Oraculorum Ethnicorum Propagatione et Duratione. Banier, la Mythologie et Fables expliq. par l'Histoire. Potter's Greek Antiquities, V. I.*

M

178 *The Heathen rejection of the*

examine; because each of them manifestly tends to confirm and strengthen in the *Heathens* that contempt of Miracles which we are considering.

For if all, or most of the wonders of Oracles were owing to Imposture, and this Imposture was frequently discovered, then that conclusion naturally follows, which we mentioned before; but if they were owing to the interposition of *Dæmons*, the *Heathens* then had recourse to the powers of Magic.

All the share therefore that I can be supposed to have in the dispute between *Van Dale* and his Opponents, must be an account of what was asserted in the 3d Chapter against the Reality of all the Miracles which the *Heathens* pretended to; and of which it will perhaps be said that the Predictions of Oracles are part; as likewise on account of the second assertion, just now made good, that *some*, at least, of these Predictions were owing to Imposture, and therefore it must be reasonable to conclude so of the *whole*.

In regard to the first account, no one need be informed, that the business of Prophecy is distinct

distinct from that of Miracles, and that they have always been looked upon as different provinces; and in regard to the latter, the most sanguine abettors of the existence of Dæmons and their influence over Oracles, have not *always* thought it necessary to exclude the Impositions of Priests.

Yet still as there was a great deal of Prodigy mixed with the Predictions of Oracles, it may not be amiss to add something in confirmation of *Van-Dale's* opinion against some objections brought against it by many celebrated Opposers; amongst which it will be first necessary to confute those of *Banier*; not only because they are later than some others, but because they are thought by him very sufficient to overthrow this whole system.^a

They may be reduced to three; First, That it is utterly inconceivable^r that this affair should be

^a Cependant je ne sçaurois m'empêcher de faire quelques reflexions très-propres à renverser le système de *Van-Dale*. *Banier*. L. 4. c. 1.

^r En effet Croira on de bonne foi, que si les Oracles n'étoient que le fruit des fourberies des Pretres, quelque

180 *The Heathen rejection of the*

be kept a secret from numbers of people, who were constantly prying into it with curious eyes, and had an interest likewise in not being deceived; especially such as had received disagreeable answers, and would have been glad to have discovered the Imposture.

Secondly, That it was as hard to conceive that the *Priests themselves* should act in concert on this occasion; that none of them should be gained

manége qu' on puisse leur preter pour s' instruire adroitement du sujet qui amenoit ceux qui venoient les consulter de leurs affaires, de leurs projets; Croira t' on dis je, que ces Oracles eussent duré si long temps, et se fussent soutenus avec tant d' éclat et de reputation, s' ils n' avoient été que l' effet de la fourberie des Prêtres? l' imposture se dement; la Mensonge ne se soutient pas. D' ailleurs il y avoit trop des temoins, trop de curieux, trop des gens interessés a ne point se laisser seduire. On trompe pendant un temps des particuliers trop crédules. Mais nullement des Peuples entieres pendant plusieurs siècles. Quelques Princes amusés par Equivoques, quelque ruse decouverte, quelque libertin trop curieux, cela suffisoit de reste pour decouvrir le Mystere, et faire tomber tout d' un coup le credit de l' Oracle. Combien des gens trompés par réponses odieuses, avoient intérêt de penetrer si c' étoient les Prêtres eux-memes qui les seduisoient. Mais quoi! aucun de ces mêmes Prêtres attirés par les promesses et les liberalités effectives de ceux qui n' oublièrent rien pour s' eclaircir

Christian Miracles considered. 181

gained over by the promises of the Great to betray the secret, or should be prompted by revenge and despair, on the fall of their *own* Oracle, to discover the artifices of *another*, which perhaps were the occasion of its fall.

Thirdly, That the Oracles sometimes demanded human Victims; which man of himself could never have done, however subject he was to passion, and therefore such demands as these must be owing purely to Dæmons.

I

éclaircir à fond sur un sujet si intéressant, ne trahit la cause de ses confreres? Mais il n'y avoit donc point de gens mercenaires en ce temps-là: l'or et les dignités n'étoient donc plus de appas séduisans. Les Prêtres d'un Oracle moins accredité ou entièrement déchu, ne reveloient donc pas, ou par desespoir, ou par vengeance les impostures de ceux qui leur enlevoient tout leur gain. Eux qui en pratiquant les semblables fourberies pouvoient bien se douter du moins de celles des autres.

Quel est donc ce concert inconnu jusque a present qui tient contre l'interêt, contre la reputation: qui reunit tant des fourbes dans un secret si religieusement observé? A ces reflexions *Le Pere Balthus* en ajoute une autre, tirée des sacrifices humaines que les Oracles demandoient: puis que l'homme, dit il, quelque maîtrisé qu'il soit par ses passions, n'auroit jamais exigé de semblable, victimes.

Banier. Mytholog. &c. L. 3. c. 1.

I have mentioned the original at large in the margin, for fear it should be thought that I have diminished the force of a battery which we were assured was so formidable, and in which many notwithstanding may acknowledge no force at all; at least one principal part of its strength was rendered ineffectual before it was brought; since *Van-Dale* has in many places of his *Work* insisted on several motives which the Oracles made use of to keep the People in their interests.

As *first*, the initiation of all the inhabitants round about into their Mysteries; at which time they used to engage them to inviolable secrecy, by forcing them to a confession of all the

• This appears from the excellent answers of the two *Lacedæmonians* on their initiation. When the Priest asked the first of them what sins he had been guilty of in his life, he answered, God knew them. — The second made the same answer to the same question; but as the Priest insisted farther on the necessity of a Confession, the *Lacedæmonian* still asked to whom he was to confess, to him, or God; when the Priest answered, to God; Then do you (says he) retire. *Plut. in Apothegm. Lacæm. Van-Dale de Orac. Diff. 2.*

‡ *Plut. de Defect. Orac. Van-Dale de Orac. Diff. 2.*

Christian Miracles considered. 183

the Sins which they had at any time * committed: *Secondly*, by supporting them likewise by part of the Gains which they had received: * and *lastly*, by driving away all *profane Persons*; by which they meant those that were like to discover their secrets."

I would not enlarge here on these motives, not because they do not deserve it, but because they have rightly been insisted on before; only give me leave to observe how strongly this *three-fold bond* must curb the passions and restrain the ardor of Mankind; and what a very inconsiderable number there ever were in the world that were not susceptible of impressions, from superstition, from interest, or fear.

There

* The *Christians*, at last, were reckoned in the number of these profane Persons, and generally ranked with the *Epicureans*; on which account they were frequently in danger from the mob: nay when the Oracle of *Alexander Pseudomantis* (as *Lucian* informs us) was falling; and the *Christians* and *Epicureans* began to insult over him as an Impostor; he made a powerful effort against them, assuring the Multitude that he was injured by their calumnies, and if they expected the Deity to be propitious, they must conspire in the destruction of these wretches. *Lucian. Pseudomant.*

184 *The Heathen rejection of the*

There were few therefore of those who belonged *not* to the Oracles that could reasonably be supposed to engage in any contrivances against them; and there must be fewer of those who *did*; since the very same motives must act more forcibly on those who had a greater interest in keeping up their reputation; and who besides must suffer a proportionably greater degree of infamy in violating their oath; and betraying the secrets of their Community.

Inconstancy in all things is frequently the sign of an inconsiderate mind; inconstancy in religious things, of a wicked one too: and no one is more generally or justly abhorred than he who turns *Apostate* to his principles, and renounces the faith he once received.

And though this may admit of some few exceptions, of which the present case may very reasonably be accounted one; yet every one knows how hazardous even these exceptions must be; how difficult it is to act with success against the stream of opinions; and how *seldom* we confide in, and *scarce ever* esteem those people who are fickle in their conduct, and fluctuate in their persuasion.

Christian Miracles considered. 185

I could if it was proper confirm what is here said by instances nearly similar in other Countries besides those of Oracles; and especially in our own; where * men of the greatest abilities have spoke with *indignation* against that set of Priests, who should give up *any* degree of power, though it did not properly belong to them: but I had rather proceed to the more effectual confutation of these objections, which the Patrons of them have most unfortunately urged; as having either absurdly raised them on no foundation, or else unskilfully mixed with them the seeds and materials of their own dissolution.

For if, on the one hand, the objectors suppose that the contrivances of Oracles were kept so secret, as never to be discovered; this supposition is confuted by the most frequent warnings of Antiquity; of which I need at present say no more than that *Eusebius* has not only informed us that there were great numbers which had wrote against them, but has likewise

* *Atterbury's* Preface to the rights &c. of an English Convocation.

wife himself assured us of some celebrated instances of their Impostures.*

But if, on the other hand, they suppose (what is indeed without controversy true) that so many of these Oraculous Delusions had been discovered, as to make one sect utterly *disclaim* their Divinity, and some of all denominations *dispute* it; then they must own that the business of Oracles was not so much a secret as the objection supposes: and as every detection of this secret must necessarily arise either from those who belonged to the Oracle, or those that did not; in each case the force of *one* objection must give way; the first, if it was the *People* that detected them; the second, if it was the *Priests*.

But perhaps it will be said, that though neither the *Priests* acted with such *concert*, nor the *People* with such *credulity* as not frequently to lay open these religious frauds; yet the objection must still be true in another sense; since

* Euseb. *præpar. Evang.* L. 4.

† The *Epicureans*. Lucian. *Pseudomant.*

‡ Euseb. *ubi supra*. Strab. L. 16.

Christian Miracles considered. 187

since it was impossible to support on this supposition the credit of Oracles in general; and therefore their flourishing in spite of these discoveries must be a proof of something *more than human* in their composition.

There is nothing more unstable than the basis on which this observation stands; every one that depends in human affairs on the *uniform exertion* of human reason, will be grievously disappointed: nay in some cases, of which the present is certainly the most remarkable, it will be safer to depend on the contrary.

In affairs of futurity men are blind even to infatuation; they act in this case so madly as if they *liked* to be imposed on; and though they are a *thousand* times duped, they will a *thousand* times believe. They are apt always to imagine that there were some *unfavourable* circumstances, some *unlooked* for and altogether improbable contingencies in their *former* trials, which would not surely attend them in the *future*; like that unhappy Monarch recorded to us in scripture, who, when he was conquered by the *Israelites* on the hills, and had no reason to think that he should not meet with the
same

188 *The Heathen rejection of the*

same fate in the Vales, yet could comfort himself with the poor reflexion; that a difference of place might help him:—*their Gods, said he and his servants^a are Gods of the Hills, and therefore they are stronger than we, but let us fight against them in the Vales, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*

But as the King of Syria fought his second battle and lost it without any reasonable expectation that he should otherwise succeed; so many would try to find in a *second* Oracle, what they had vainly sought after in the *first*; nay one may reasonably affirm that whilst this strong passion for futurity held its place in their breasts, it might be possible for them to conspire the destruction of *some* Oracles whose frauds they had detected; and yet contribute with all their power to the establishment of *others*.

It was the knowledge of this foible and imperfection of the heart, that made him amongst the

^a 1 Kings ch. 20. v. 23.

^b Genus hominum potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax; quod in civitate nostra et vetabitur semper et retinebitur. Tacit. L. 1. *Histor.*

Christian Miracles considered. 189

the *Roman* historians, who was best acquainted with it conclude, that the *Astrologers* were a set of Men, that, though they were always forbid at *Rome*, yet would always be retained.

And ^c one of great discernment amongst the *Moderns* has in like manner affirmed of those *Astrologers* who every month foretold his death in vain, that as they would prophecy right in the end, they would then be more remembered for the *once* they told truth, than for the *many times* they lyed.^d

^e *Cicero* indeed could observe in the most rational and affecting manner, that comparing the many great and splendid promises which the *Chaldeans* had made to *Crassus*, to *Pompey*, and *Cæsar*, with the miserable and unfortunate end of them all ; he began to wonder how the predictions of *such wretches* could be believed :

But

^c Henry Le Grand.

^d Le Journal du Marechal de Bassompierre. pag. 24. Bayle, pensées Diverses. V. 1.

^e Sed quid plura? quotidie refelluntur. Quam multa ego Pompeio &c. ut mihi permirum videatur quenquam exstare, qui etiam nunc credat iis, quorum prædicta quotidie videat re et eventis refelli. *Cic. de Divin.* lib. 2.

190 *The Heathen rejection of the*

but what *Cicero* could observe, we are sure the generality of men would not; but that they would rather endeavour to confirm the predictions that regarded these mighty rivals by the *grandeur* of their lives, than confute them by the *calamity* of their deaths.

We may illustrate what has been said by a parallel instance: — The Gods then of the *Heathens* we are at this time assured were vain; and that they could not possibly have any share in those wonderful deliverances, which their votaries had ascribed to their power: yet their

Tem-

At *Diagoras*, cum *Samothraciam* venisset, *Atheos* ille qui dicitur; atque ei quidem amicus, tu qui putas *Deos* humana negligere, nonne animadvertis ex tot tabulis pictis quam multi votis vim tempestatis effugerint, in portumque salvi pervenerint? ita fit, inquit: illi enim nusquam picti sunt, qui naufragia fecerunt, in marique perierunt. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 3.*

This is somewhat differently told by *Laertius* of *Diogenes*, though he says some impute it to *Diagoras*.

Θαυμάζοντες τινὸς τὰ ἐν Σαμοθράκῃ ἀναθήματα, ἴφην Διογένης, πολλῶν ἂν εἴη πλείων, εἰ καὶ οἱ μὴ σωθέντες ἀνετίθουσιν. Οἱ δὲ τὸτο Διαγόρου φασὶ τὴν Μηλίαν.

Diog. Laert. lib. 6.

The pretended *Clemens*, of whom *Mosheimius* says that he is *non semper ineptus scriptor*, deserves here this commendation at least; since he has imitated these passages

and

Christian Miracles considered. 191

Temples were full of votive tables on this account; and as the bulk of Mankind were persuaded of the truth of their interposition, they readily acquiesced in calamitous circumstances, and thought *one* great escape was sufficient to counterbalance *many* misfortunes. — *Diagoras* indeed, when these tables were shewed him of those that had escaped at Sea, could most pertinently and sagaciously ask, where were those of the *drowned*? but this was a question that was fit only for a *Diagoras*, as the other observation was for *Cicero*: the *common herd* would still believe in established Oracles^s and

and applied them excellently to the Miracles of *Æsculapius*.

Ἄλλοι δὲ νοσήσαντες καὶ εὐχαμενοὶ ἐξ αὐτομάτου ὑγιαίναντες ἔς ἐπεκαλέσαντο ἔγραψαν, καὶ ἀναθήματα ἐποίησαν. Οἱ μὲν τοίγχε μετὰ εὐχὴν διαφωνήσαντες τὰς ἀποτυχίας ἀναδῆναι ἔδυνανται. *Clemens apud Moshem. Cudworth. c. 5.*

^s The necessity of this belief struck *Eusebius* so much that he wondered how the Philosophers themselves could break through it; than which observation nothing can possibly be more applicable to *Eusebius* himself, if his declarations are sincere; who though he has brought the same arguments for the impostures of Oracles, as the Peripatetics, Cynics, and Epicureans who derided them; did not yet so far shake off the prejudices of education as not to impute them to supernatural causes,

192 *The Heathen rejection of the*

and established Gods, though they had often been deceived by the *former*, and neglected by the *latter*; and one prediction that was right, and one deliverance that was remarkable, though both might be owing to natural causes, would be sufficient to confirm them in their old Superstition.

Nay rather their old Superstition wanted *nothing* to confirm it; the *venerable* aspect of Antiquity was of itself a sufficient recommendation: length of time had made it take root so *deep* that it was not easy to be *shaken*: and the four hundred and seventy thousand years which in a like case are urged by *Quintus*ⁿ in favour of Astrology, is an argument on all such occasions too powerful to be resisted.

Hence

Οὗς (φιλόσοφος) καὶ μάλιστα ἐγωγε ἰθαύμασα, ὅπως ἐν τοῖς Ἑλλήνων ἥθεσι τραφέντες ἐξέτι τῶν σπαργάνων, παῖς παρὰ πατρὸς θεὸς εἶναι τὸς δηλούμενος παρειληφότες, τὰ βωόμενα χρησθήρια ὅθεν φέρειν ἀληθείας ἀπέλεγξαν, &c.

Euseb. de Præp. Evang. lib. 4.

ⁿ Inrideamus Haruspices: Vanos futilesque esse dicamus &c. contemnamus etiam Babylonios &c. condemnemus, inquam, eos aut stultitiæ, aut vanitatis, aut impudentiæ qui CCCCLXX millia annorum, ut ipsi dicunt, monumentis comprehensa continent &c.

Cic. de Divin. lib. 1. l. 19.

Christian Miracles considered. 193

Hence in fact we find, that, when Paganism was declining, and had nothing reasonable to say in its defence, this was the last strong-hold against all the attacks of Christianity, and was for ever made use of against any change of Religion: nay even when the thing was done, and only some remains of Heathenism were to be abolished; and this request was made by an absolute ¹ Prince to a Senate and People^k, whom *Tiberius* ¹ had long ago pronounced to be a race born for slavery; yet their answer was, that by the practice of the Gentile Religion their city had remained unconquered for twelve hundred years, and if they changed it, they knew not what might happen^m.

If we add to all this, many of those observations which have been made in the third

Chap-

That there is no mistake in the figures, *Davies* well observes from *Diodorus*.

Καλδαῖοι ἑπτὰ καὶ τετραράκοντα μυριάδας καὶ τρεῖς ἐπὶ ταύταις χιλιάδας εἰς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρῃ διαβάσειν γεγονέναι καταριθμῶσιν, ἀφ' οὗ τοῦ παλαιοῦ τῶν ἄστρον ταῖς παρατηρήσεις ποιῶνται. *Diod. Sic. lib. 2.*

¹ *Theodosius Major.* ^k The Romans.

^l O homines ad servitutem natos! *Tacit. Annal.*

^m Ἐκεῖνα (τὰ πατρία) μὲν γὰρ φυλαξάντας ἢ διανοσίῃς καὶ χιλίοις σχεδὸν ἔτεσι ἀπόρθητον τὴν πόλιν οἰκεῖν, ἕτερα δ' αὐτῇ τῶν ἀλλαξαμένων τὸ ἐκδεσόμενον ἀγνοεῖν

Zosim. Hist. lib. 5. ad finem.

Chapter of Prodigies, and in the last about the established Religion, which are exactly suitable to the present case; nothing more need be required for the confutation of the two first objections: I proceed therefore to the examination of the third, which considering the Quarter it comes from, is very remarkable.

However let us first consider the case itself, abstractedly from any relation to the Objector: an Oracle, *supposed* by the Antients to be under the direction of some God, commanded an human Sacrifice: — therefore it *was* so. — Nothing surely can be more apparent than the vanity of this conclusion; since if it was really supposed, that only *mere men* directed it, they would sometimes be naturally led to act in this manner.

The custom of human Sacrifices was established in the world, and there was scarce any Nation

^m Porphy. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. lib. 4. c. 16. Philo. ap. Eund. Clem. Al. admon. ad Gen. Herodot. lib. 2. Diodor. Sicul. lib. 1. 5. Cæsar. de Bell. Gallic. lib. 6. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 30. Porphy. de Abstinent. lib. 2. Athenæus. lib. 13. Iornand. de rebus Gothicis. Alexand. ab Alex. cap. ult.

nation either *barbarous* or *civil*, where it did not in some degree prevail ^m.

What therefore the Priests did in this case was no barbarous and singular invention of their own; it was only complying with the Modes of Worship in the World, and requiring for a Sacrifice, what the *Gods themselves* would require.

So that instead of drawing on themselves the indignation of the inhabitants, and running the risque of a discovery; they were more like to gain an additional degree of credit and veneration for their Oracle, as well as a suitable *dread and horror* of that Divinity, who by the stated means of appeasing him was so much to be feared ⁿ.

This appeared of such consequence to the Author quoted in the Margin ^o, that he thought

* Ad terrorem tamen Criminosis ex justitiâ divinâ incutiendum utilia hæc sacrificia erant, quum Deum iratum haud aliter quam cruentâ, immo et humanâ nonnunquam victimâ placari posse ex sacerdotum suorum doctrina (Populus) existimaverint. *Herbert. de Relig. Gent. c. 14.*

° Sed neque hic steterê sacerdotes. Sincerioribus enim doctrinæ partibus abdicatis, ad tremenda quædam sacra

thought it sufficient to account for even the Origin of human sacrifices themselves; and that if the Priests of an Oracle had *first* demanded them of the world, there would have been nothing in such a demand inconsistent with the common and ordinary arts of their profession.

And yet there is but ^pone instance of all those shocking ones which ^a*Eusebius* has collected; and not one of all those which the ^rpainful answerer of *Fontenelle* has collected, that can possibly suppose that Oracles were the first commanders of human Sacrifices; and even this one as related by *Dionysius* has much too large a portion of the oracular gloom and obscurity to be the foundation of this opinion.

The

populi animos pelliciebant; adeo ut victimas humanas Diis offerrent. *Herbert. ibid.*

And again, Ut detur porro ritus incongruos ad cultum Dei stabiliendum a sacerdotibus excogitados fuisse &c. ut detur horrenda, immaniaque fuisse quædam Gentilium sacrificia &c. *Id. ibid.*

^p *Dionys. Halic. Rom. Antiq. L. 1.*

^a *Euseb. Præp. Evang. L. 4. c. 16.*

^r *Pausan. L. 6. c. 6. Id. L. 7. c. 19. Phutarch parall. Græc. et Rom. Ælian. Var. Hist. L. 12. c. 28. Macrob. Saturn. L. 1. c. 7. Lactant. Div. Inst. L. 1. Oenomaus*

apud

The answerer we may be sure is hardly pressed when he has collected the numerous passages quoted in the Margin, and not one to the purpose; so that he has contributed nothing to the establishment of the old opinion about Oracles, except it should be thought something to have defended them in the same evasive and ambiguous manner in which they were formerly delivered.

I affirm (says he) that Oracles commanded human Sacrifices: commanded them? how? at their very Origin or Birth? nothing is more false: how then? in common with other men? and when they were already established in the world? nothing is more weak in itself,

nor
apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. L. 5. c. 27. Id. L. 5. c. 13.
Virg. Æneid. L. 6. Id. L. 2.

Two of these citations from *Lactantius* and *Macrobius* only relate to the Oracle mentioned by *Dionysius*, and therefore are only brought in to fill up the number; for the rest, we may judge of their validity by the last mentioned one of *Virgil*; which will shew what little occasion there is to mention them at large.

*Sanguine placastis ventos, et Virgine cæsa,
Cum primum Illiacas Danaï venistis ad oras:
Sanguine quaerendū reditus, animaque litandum
Argolicâ* —————

Virgil. Æneid. L. 2.

nor more foreign to his design. Compare now this answer with the antient ones of Oracles, and you will find, as was said before, all the chicanery of them here; and we may now likewise add the chicanery without the substance: for the answer of an Oracle taken one way was to the purpose and true; but this, taken one way is false; taken the other way impertinent.

But whatever be the origin of this sort of victims we know that they were seldom ordered by the Oracles; and indeed it was but reasonable it should be so; but if it had been oftner, the objection comes but awkwardly from a *good Catholic*, and *Jesuit*, as it in effect assures us that no Priest of an Oracle could be so absurd as to demand a *few* human victims; at the very same time that *millions* have been demanded by the Priests of *Rome*.

Neither can it be alledged with any colour of reason by a defender of the Inquisition, that these cases are unlike; since by this declaration whenever they *are* like, he *himself* must acknowledge the force of the argument; whenever they are *not*, *others* at least must acknowledge

ledge it redoubled. — If, for instance, the Oracle doomed an innocent man to slaughter, so did the Inquisition: but then the Oracle did this for the most part agreeably to the Modes of a prevailing worship, the Inquisition did it in direct contradiction to the *Spirit* and *Genius* of the most benevolent Religion.

I would not push this argument *ad hominem* any farther, since it is not indeed necessary that every Catholic should be a defender of the Inquisition, especially in that Country,* where the *gleaming* and *barbarity* of intemperate zeal is mitigated and subdued by the most liberal arts: I cannot however dismiss the comparison without shewing the use of it in regard to the present subject, abstractedly from any personal considerations.

I suppose then it will be easily granted at this time of the world, that the violence and outrage of the Romish Communion is not on account of the *real* doctrines of Christianity; but on account of a system so *mixed* and *corrupted* with human inventions, that if a primitive Apostle was to reform the World, and preach

Christianity in the streets of Rome, he must suffer a fresh and heavier persecution under the pretended *Vice-gerent* of Christ, than he had done under those who denyed his Miracles and *abhorred* his name.

As therefore it would be wrong to conclude on account of those Victims, that are offered up to the Inquisition for want of faith in this System, that it was the *God* of our Religion, and not *blood-thirsty Villains* that required them, so likewise we may observe in regard to the Victims of Oracles, that it would be wrong to impute them rather to the malevolence of Demons, than the craftiness of Men.

Nay rather, as in the former case we ought necessarily to conclude that an impiety so *flagrant* must be the work of Mortals, because it cannot be conceived of the all perfect and beneficent Author of our Being; so likewise in the latter case we may very reasonably make the same conclusion; since it is not to be conceived that God would expose Mankind to such powerful proofs as must necessarily arise from the real predictions of Oracles; and at the same time permit the most malignant Beings to
deface

deface his Workmanship, and lay waste his Creation.

If the Reader is much versed in the disputes about Oracles; he will be here perhaps naturally led to ask how it came to pass that a Writer so well enclined to support their credit as *Banier* appears to be, and who besides without any apparent necessity has confidently taken upon himself the demolition of *Van-Dale's* system, should yet omit one of the principal arguments which the defenders of Oracles had urged against him; especially since some appearance of the other arguments is to be met with in many places of these writers.

The principal point I mean is the testimony of some of the Fathers^a boldly affirming on this occasion, that many of the Dæmons themselves had confessed to the Christians who overcame them, that they had presided over Oracles, and were the Authors of all those manifold

ca-

^a *Moeb. de Orac. Ethn. prop. et durat. Balbus, reponse a P. Hist. des Orac. Vol. 1, 2. passim.*

^b *Tertullian, Lactant. Minuc. Cyprian. Reponse a P. Hist. des Orac. Vol. 1. c. 17. Id. Vol. 2. c. 21.*

calamities that from hence were occasioned in the world.

It is not impossible but the good *Abbe* might be of opinion, that the *antient* Fathers like some *modern* ones were not *always* to be taken at their word; that their strongest assertions in extraordinary matters, as *⁂ Peter* affirmed of the rigorous clauses in his Father's will, were frequently to be interpreted *cum grano salis*; and sometimes in a manner quite contrary to their natural signification. *

If this really was the opinion of *Banier*, he has here at least some reason, and has shewn himself much wiser by his silence, than he had done before by his disputation; as will appear by the following instance.

Saint Jerom writing to *Eustochium* informs her, that for his too great attachment to the study of heathen Learning, he was brought before

* *Tale of a Tub*. pag. 77.

⁂ *Daillé, l'employ des Peres*. ch. 5.

⁂ *Nec vero sopor ille fuerat aut vana somnia quibus sæpe deludimur. Testis est Tribunal illud, ante quod jacui; testis iudicium triste quod timui. Ita mihi nunquam*

Christian Miracles considered. 203

fore the presence of our Lord, and there chastised for it with stripes. — “And think not, “ says he, that this was any of those drowsy “ fancies or vain dreams, with which we are “ sometimes deluded. I call to witness hereof “ that tribunal, before which I then lay, and “ that terrible judgment, which I was then in “ dread of. — So may I never hereafter fall “ into the like danger, as this is true.” I do assure you that I found abundant marks of this “ chastisement on my shoulders, and that I afterwards felt it when I was awake; so that “ I have ever since had a greater affection for “ divine studies, than I had before for human.

Now a simple and plain Man not versed in the frauds of Rhetoricians, and unused to the pious artifices of the Fathers would naturally be inclined to look upon this as a true story, and sincerely interpret it according to the letter: and yet such a man would run the risque of exposing himself for his simplicity, and smart

as *quam contingat in talem incidere questionem! Liventes fateor me habuisse scapulas; plagas sensisse post somnium; et tanto dehinc Studio Divina legisse, quanto non ante mortalia legeram. Hieronym. Epist. 21. ad Eustoch.*

² *Daillé, l'employ des Peres. c. 5, 6, &c.*

as much for it in *reality*, as Saint *Jerom* had done in a *vision*: — For a vision it seems it was, or perhaps something still less substantial, only a Rhetorical piece of Artifice contrived chiefly for the better and more powerfully diverting Men from their too great affection for the books of the *Heathens* which were thought hurtful to Christianity.

Thus when *Ruffinus*, who had some disputes with Saint *Jerom*, took occasion to object to him that contrary to the Oath^a which he had before taken, he did notwithstanding apply himself to the study of Pagan learning; Saint *Jerom* after having alledged many things to free himself from this accusation concludes thus;

Hence

^a Objicit mihi (Ruffinus) perjurium, et mixtum sacrilegio, quod in libro quo ad instituendam &c.

Hieron. Apol. 1. adv. Ruffin.

^b Hæc dicerem, si quippiam vigilans promississem, nunc autem novum impudentiæ genus, objicit mihi somnium meum. *Hieronym. Apolog 1. advers. Ruffin.*

Presently after this he refers him to the words of the Prophets saying we must not give heed to Dreams: for neither doth an adulterous Dream cast a man into Hell, nor that of Martyrdom bring him to Heaven.

Audiat Prophetarum voces, somniis non esse credendum; quia nec adulterii somnium ducit me ad Tartarum; nec corona Martyrii, ad cælum levat. *Hieronym. ibid.*

And

Hence you see what I could have urged for myself, had I promised any such thing waking; but now do but take notice of this new and unheard of kind of impudence, he objects to me my very dreams.^b

Which impudence is the greatest, that of *Ruffinus* or Saint *Jerom*, is in the present case not very difficult to determine: Saint *Jerom* has by many degrees the best claim to it here, though in some other particulars *Ruffinus* will not yield it to him at all, especially in the following Story.

Gregory Thaumaturgus being benighted in the Alps took up his lodgings in a Temple of *Apollo*;

And at last he plainly and in express words says that this promise of his was made in a Dream;* and that therefore of consequence it was of no obligation: all which taken together most clearly shews that it was the Oath signified in his letter to *Eustochium* which *Ruffinus* objected to, and which it required so much pains on his side to clear up.

* Iter ei (Gregorio Thaumaturgo) fuisse quondam per Alpes dicitur hyemis tempore; et quum pervenisset ad summum Alpium jugum, nivibus repleta erant omnia, nullum usquam diverforium: phanum ibi tantum Apollinis

* Tu a me somnii exigis sponfionem. *Id. ibid.*

Apollo; and after he had left it, the Priest going according to custom to consult the Oracle, it would return no answer; Victim after Victim was offered, but in vain; at last the Priest being covered with confusion at this unexpected silence, he was told the reason of it in a dream; that it was *Gregory* who had caused it, and *Gregory* only could remove it. The Priest having got this certain intelligence makes haste after *Gregory*, and informs him of the whole matter, assuring him at the same time that it would be a breach of hospitality not to restore the

linis erat, cui succedens transactâ nocte discessit. Sacerdos vero erat quidam phani ejus, cui consulere simulachrum Apollinis mos erat, et reddere responsa poscentibus, ex quo etiam ei alimoniz quæstus esse videbatur. Igitur post digressum *Gregorii*, offerre consulta, et responsa poscere sacerdos accessit ex more; nihil inde responsi veniebat. Repetit victimas, silentium permanet: Iterum atque iterum litat, surdis ingerit fabulam: cumque stupore novi silentii æstualet sacerdos, nocte ei assistens Dæmonium dicit in somnis: quid me illic invocas quo jam venire non possum? percontanti causam, adventu se *Gregorii* dicebat expulsam. Quid nunc remedii daretur cum perquireret; ait non aliter sibi licere ingredi locum illum nisi *Gregorius* permisisset. Quibus auditis sacerdos occupat viam, multa apud semet ipsum volvens, atque animo recusante pertractans venit ad *Gregorium*: adortusque eum rem pandit

ex

Christian Miracles considered. 207

the God to his former power: on which the good man without any hesitation wrote the following Billet.

GREGORY # APOLLO.

"I give you leave to return to your Station,
"and perform your business as usual.

This Letter being carried by the Priest, and hid near the image of the Demon, he gave answers as before, and all things went on in the former Channel.

The
ex ordine, humanitatis suae atque hospitalitatis admonuit, querelam depulsi numinis promit, ademptam facultatem sui questus deplorat, ac reddi sibi omnia in pristinum statum deponit. At ille nihil moratur, scribit epistolam in hac verba:

GREGORIUS APOLLINI.

"Permitto tibi redire in locum tuum, et agere quae con-
"suevisti!" Hanc epistolam sacerdos accipit, et ad phanum defert, positaque ea juxta simulachrum affuit Demon, ac dedit responsa poscenti. Tum ille &c. Cumque enixius et pertinacius persisteret, Catechumenus est ab eo factus. Etiam baptismum consecutus est, et in tantum vitae merito ac fidei virtute profecit, ut ipse beato Gregorio in Episcopatu successor existeret.

Ruffin. in Euf.

The Priest however concluding from these extraordinary events, that *Gregory* must be superiour to the God which he had subdued, came to him, and after much importunity was made a Catechumen, then was Baptized, afterwards was made a Bishop, and in conclusion succeeded his miraculous Converter in his own sec.

Thus the Story ends to the satisfaction of all parties; the God was reinstated, the Father was adored, and the Priest was made a Bishop; only simple posterity was deceived: but it may be asked perhaps why so? what is there in this relation more monkish and sophistificate than in many of the same nature related by the primitive *Christians*? and if not, why is this singled out as the only object of ridicule? and

^a Hæc quasi Eusebii propria verba, cum tamen et hæc et plurima alia, Eusebio ne per somnium quidem cogitata fuerint, insuit versioni ejus egregius noster (cujus quis non miretur impudentiam?) *Ruffinus*. Interim isti qui non intelligant linguam Græcam, *Ruffini* hujus versioni securè nimium fidem habent, existimant seipsum legere Eusebium. *Van-Dale de Orac. Ethnic. in Præfat.*

Sed

and why is *Ruffinus* on this account to be placed in the front, and dispute the prize of assurance with Saint *Jerom*?

Indeed one cannot help owning that *Story for Story* St. *Jerom*'s seems to be the most extraordinary: but then he has an evasion which *Ruffinus* has not; the former in his narration has left some hints of his design, and wisely seized some passes to secure his retreat: but the latter has ventured on downright forgery, and pretended to translate from *Eusebius* what *Eusebius* never wrote.

By this means the *Story* however it might have flourished in the times of Ignorance, has sunk by degrees in its credit, and in the present Age is reduced so low that Men of all denominations are ashamed of it.

As

Sed quæ *Ruffinus* in *Eusebio* suo quem a se Latine versum affirmat, de *Gregorio Pontico*, magno illo seu mirifico miraculosè narrat lib. 7. c. 25. In posterioribus *Eusebii* editionibus, ac in Græco maxime non habentur. Et fabulis magis mendacibus et superstitionis similiora sunt quam veris narrationibus.

Centuriat. Magdeburg. Cent. 3. c. 13.

As to the Origin of this Story I make no doubt but that if it was regularly traced, it would be found to arise from that celebrated Prophecy * reported by so many^f to be delivered by *Apollo* to *Augustus*, at the latter end of his Reign: but in this it cannot be worth our while to enquire, because we should only end where we begun: and the only conclusion would be, that one Forgery was built on another.^g

The inference that necessarily follows from what has hitherto been said of *Ruffinus* and Saint *Jerom* is, that we cannot be too cautious in admitting the testimony of men, who conscientiously allow themselves such a latitude in their relations, and zealously contribute to the imposition of Mankind; and this inference will appear yet of more force to the Reader, when he is assured that these instances are only amongst many of the like nature collected by *Daille* in his treatise
of

* Παις — Ἐσπας κείρασι μὲ θεοῖς πανάρετον ἀνάσσειν
Τὸν δὲ δέμον ἐργάζειν, καὶ αἰδὼν αὐτοῖς ἰκέσθαι.
Αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν βασιλῶν ἡμετέραν.

*Me puer Hebraeus Divos Deus ipse gubernans,
Cedere sede jubet, tristemque redire sub Orcum.
Aris ergo dehinc tacitus abscedito nostris.*

[†] *Suidas*, *Nicephorus*, *Cedrenus*, who cites it from *Eusebius* where it does not now appear.

Christian Miracles considered. 211

of the right use of the Fathers: which is such a treatise as one might expect from a fortunate concurrence of the greatest judgement, the most excellent temper, and the most profound erudition.

I must refer him therefore for farther satisfaction in this matter to the treatise itself, after having first observed, that if the Opposers of *Van-Dale* had considered it with the attention and impartiality it deserved; they would have found in it an answer to whatever they have objected on this head long before they wrote.

But this is not the only exception we have to the influence of Dæmons over Oracles; and the uncertainty of it will still be encreased by the testimony of Father against Father — *Clemens* of *Alexandria*,^a *Eusebius*,^b *Origen*,^c *Minucius*,^d and *Cyprian*^e have all left very strong

^f This is most incontestably proved by *Van-Dale*, chiefly from the great probability that *Augustus* never took the Journey to *Delphi* at the latter end of his life.

Van-Dale de Orac. Dissert. I.

^a *Clem. admon. ad Gent.*

^b *Euseb. de præp. Evang. L. 4.*

^c *Origen. cont. Cels. L. 7.*

^d *Minuc. Fel. Octav. c. 26. Ed. Dav.*

^e *Cyprian de Idolorum vanitate.*

212 *The Heathen rejection of the*

strong indications of their being engaged on the contrary side; and though *all of them*, after having shewn the Impostures of Oracles, do still admit the existence, and *most of them* the interposition of Dæmons; yet will it not from hence by any means follow, that they really believed what they said.

The case of *Eusebius* and *Origen* has already been very properly considered, and a very rational account of their conduct has been given: *Minucius* and *Cyprian* are here as in many

▪ Voilà apparemment ce qui fut cause que dans les premiers siècles de l'Eglise on embrassa si généralement ce Système sur les Oracles. Nous perçons encore assez dans les tenebres d'une antiquité éloignée, pour y démêler que les Chrétiens ne prenoient pas tant cette opinion à cause de la vérité qu'ils y trouvoient, qu'à cause de la facilité qu'elle leur donnoit à combattre le Paganisme; et s'ils renaissent dans les temps où nous sommes, délivrez comme nous des raisons étrangères qui les déterminoient à ce parti, je ne doute point qu'ils ne suivissent presque tous le nôtre. *Fontenelle, Hist. des Orac. part. 1. c. 9.*

• Jam enim venio ad illa auspicia et auguria Romana quæ summo labore collecta testatus es, et pœnitenter omissa, et observata fœliciter. Clodius scilicet et Flaminius, et Junius ideo exercitus perdiderunt, quod pul-
lorum solistimum tripudium expectandum non putaverunt? Quid Regulus? nonne auguria servavit et captus est? &c.

Quæ

many other places one; but as the testimony of the former is more full to the purpose and less liable to exception, I shall produce it at large; in which the most incurious observer can scarce help taking notice of this remarkable circumstance; that though he was able sufficiently to prove his point without the assistance of Dæmons, and had already proved that *most* of the Oracular answers were false, and that they might be owing to conjecture when true; does yet immediately introduce a whole legion of Spirits to manage an affair which was already in very proper hands.°

A
Quæ vero et quanta de Oraculis prosequar? post mortem Amphiaræus ventura respondit, qui proditum iri se ob monile ab uxore nescivit. Tiresias cæcus futura videbat, qui præsentia non videbat. De Pyrrho, Ennius Apollinis Pythii responsa confinxit, cum jam Apollo versus facere desisset; cuius tunc cautum illud et ambiguum defecit oraculum, cum et politiores homines, et minus creduli esse cæperunt. Et Demosthenes quod sciret responsa simulata, Πυθίῳ Pythiam querebatur. At nonnunquam tamen veritatem vel auspiciâ vel oracula tetigere: quanquam inter multa mendacia videri possit industriam casus imitatus.

Thus far *Minucius* has imitated *Cicero* on this subject, what follows about Spirits is he says the principal point: and where the Heathen ends, the Christian begins; Aggrediar tamen fontem ipsum erroris et pravitatis, unde omnis caligo ista manavit, et altius eruere, et aperire manifestius, Spiritus sunt &c. *Minucius* ubi supra.

214 *The Heathen rejection of the*

A modern Philosopher who is used to acquiesce in the most obvious causes, and thinks it wrong to have recourse to the distant, when the nearer will suffice, would be apt here to be offended with this *waste* of Dæmons, and be naturally inclined to ask for what end it was made: the answer to which, will not only explain the conduct of *Minucius*, but that likewise of many others amongst the Fathers who went much greater lengths on the present occasion.

The truth therefore seems to be, that those who argued like *Minucius* both ways, took care to shew their adversaries that they were doubly prepared to receive them: and those who did not, took a shorter method: they knew that it was not easy to convict all the Oracles of Imposture; but they knew that the *Heathens* admitted in common with themselves the existence of certain Spirits, to whose charge many things might be laid, which would with difficulty be confuted, since they were of such a nature as they might well be supposed to be guilty of: by this means the poor *Heathens* were absolutely overcome, and reduced to such wretched and deplorable straights, as made all

20

re-

resistance vain; the all-powerful force of truth was in the first place against them; which if any had the courage and confidence to oppose, they must certainly yield at the next encounter to Arguments and Demons which themselves had raised.

Add to this, that it seemed in those times to be a point of orthodoxy and zeal to argue in this manner; and it could not be thought right to omit any possible opportunity, much less so fair a one as the present, of introducing so plain and incontestable a truth as the doctrine of Demons appeared to be; a doctrine which in their former and present State they had maintained, and which Heathenism and Christianity had both conspired to establish.

Indeed it may at first appear somewhat extraordinary even upon this plan, that *Minucius* should talk of the above-mentioned confession of Demons, and maintain it in as strong and positive terms as any that went before him;

but
Hæc omnia solum plerique pars vestrum ipsos
Demons de semetipsis confiteri quibus a nobis tormenta
verborum et orationis incendia de corporibus exarantur.

216 *The Heathen rejection of the*

but yet if we join the frequent detections of Oracles by the Christians, and the common opinion of Spirits together; by which means every detection would generally be thought a victory over a Dæmon; and if we add likewise the quick and mighty accession of the wonderful to every Story of this nature; and the easy admission it met with from men, who found it agree with their principles, and of use to a system, which they were zealous to defend; and above all, if we take a liberty of interpreting, which has already been taken with more important accounts, and that with some appearance of reason; I hope all this will be thought sufficient to clear up as intricate and embarrassing a circumstance as any that appears in Story.

But if it should not, there is yet little progress made; if we should grant farther that Spirits were introduced only to account for

Ipse Saturnus et Serapis et Jupiter, et quicquid Dæmonum colitis victi dolore quod sunt eloquantur nec utique in turpitudinem sui, nonnullis præsertim vestrum assistentibus, mentiuntur. Iphis testibus esse eos Dæmonas de se verum confitentibus credite. Minuc. Fel. c. 27.

Christian Miracles considered. 217

some oracular answers, which were so particularly framed as not to be otherwise accounted for; and if it was sufficiently clear, that this was the real opinion of *some* of the Fathers; yet it could not be the opinion of *others*. A man must wink hard to think this could be the case with *Minucius*; but he must absolutely shut his eyes to think it could be the case with *him*, who of all the primitive Christians seems to have had the greatest knowledge of the *Grecian* affairs, and whose testimony therefore is the most unexceptionable. This is *Clement* of *Alexandria* who has left such strong and positive declarations, that every Species of Oracles was owing to human invention, that none but a *Jesuit* would dispute it. These are quoted at large in the margin, and it is easy to

see

• The Scripture. Whose doctrine of Devils has been reduced to natural diseases, and explained in the most full and ample manner by *Bekker*.

Le Monde Enchanté, Vol. 2. *passim*.

• I have not added to these causes, though I might with great justice the many lies of this nature that went about, and which were too absurd to be admitted by the Fathers themselves. — Aliquos Dæmonum contra se pugnantium (ait Hieronymus) portenta confingere, ut apud imperitos et vulgi homines miraculum sui faciant, et inde lucra sectentur. *Hieron. Epist. ad Rust.*

218 *The Heathen rejection of the*

see that it requires the utmost efforts of Jesuitical skill and effrontery to invalidate them. Let us see how the good Father attempts it, which is thus; "*Clemens*," says he, after having "shewn that the Gods of the *Heathens* were "only cruel and sanguinary Devils thus goes "on, I can shew you Men that were better "than your Gods, I mean than your Devils; "as *Cyrus* and *Solon*, who without contradiction "were preferable to your *Apollo*. This God "loves Presents, but he does not love Men. "He betrayed *Cræsus* who was his Friend "without calling to mind the Presents he had "received from him. He gloried in leading "him to his Funeral pile, by obliging him to "pass the River *Halys*. Thus Devils lead those "they love to the Fire."

The

Ἄδύτα τοίνυν ἄθια μὴ πολυπραγμονεῖτε, οὐδὲ βαράθρων γόματα, τερατείας ἱμπλῆα, &c. Σεισθήσεται γὰρ ἡ κατὰ πάσης πηγῆς, &c. Διόγησται ἡμῖν καὶ τῆς ἄλλης μακροτικῆς, μᾶλλον δὲ μαυρικῆς, τὰ ἄχρηστα χρησθήρια, τὸν Κλάριον, τὸν Πύθιον, τὸν Διδυμῆα, τὸν Ἀμφιάρεω, τὸν Ἀπόλλω, τὸν Ἀμφίλοχον· εἰ δὲ βύλει καὶ τερατοσκοπὸς καὶ οἰωνοσκοπὸς, καὶ τῶν οὐνείων κριτὰς ἀνιερὺν σὺν αὐτοῖς ἔσονται δ' ὅμῃ παρὰ τὸν Πυθίον τῆς ἀλευρομαντείας &c. καὶ μὴν ἄδύτα Αἰγυπτίων, καὶ τυρρηνῶν νηκυομαντείας σκοτὸς παραδιδόσθαι μανικά ταῦτα, ὡς ἀληθῆς, ἀνθρώπων ἀφ' ὧν Σοφιστήρια. *Clem. Admon. ad Gent.*

Christian Miracles considered. 219

The wish of the good Protestant Arch-Bishop, "That the lameness and halting of their Founder *Loyola* might never depart from all the contrivances of the *Jesuits*," is in the present most exactly accomplished. It halts so much that every motion of it is painful, and were it not designed to impose upon Mankind, it would really move one's pity.

Its very setting out betrays too much weakness and inability to come to any prosperous end; *Clemens*, says *Balbus*, had just been proving at large, "that the Gods of the Heathens" were only sanguinary Devils;" when in reality he had never been proving it at all; but had on the contrary been shewing by unexceptionable instances that they were only deify'd Men.

Reponse a l'Hist. des Orac. Vol. I. p. 2. c. 3.

Αυτοὶ γὰρ ἔχουσιν βελτίονα τῶν ὑμῶν τῶν θεῶν, τῶν δαιμόνων, ἐπιδείξας τὸν Κύριον, καὶ τὸν Σάββατον. Φιλάδοφος ὑμῶν ὁ Φαῖδος, ἀλλ' ὁ Φιλάνθρωπος, πρῶτον τὸν Κροῖσον τὸν Φίλον, καὶ τὴν μηδὲν ἐκλαθόμενος, ἔπειτα Φιλάδοφον ἡμῶν ἀνήγαγε τὸν Κροῖσον διὰ τοῦ Ἀλφειοῦ ἐπὶ τὴν πύρρον, ἔπειτα Φιλάντες οἱ δαίμονες ὁδηγῶσιν εἰς τὰ πύρρα.

Clemens Alex. ubi supra.

Tillotson's Sermons Vol. I. Sermon on the 5th of Nov.

220 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Men. After this he goes on thus,* “since therefore they are not Gods which you worship, let us see whether they are Demons;” and of the nature of these Demons Clemens could not possibly be ignorant, and indeed has given us an intimation in what immediately follows, that they were Gods of the second order; which were supposed to be Creatures in every perfection much superiour to Men.† If therefore he had actually endeavoured to prove their existence, he would actually have been confuting himself, and would have given them a Class in the order of Beings too distinguished to fall in with his design.

“If

* *Clem. ubi supra. p. 16, 17, 18, &c. Ed. Mor. Lutet. 1629.*

† *Εἰεν δὴ ἐπειδὴν ἔ θεοὶ, ὥς θρησκύετε, αὐτοῖς ἐπισκέψασθαι μοι δοκεῖ, εἰ ὄντως εἰεν δαίμονες, δευτέρα ταύτη, ὡς ὑμεῖς φασί, ἐγκαταλεγόμενοι τάξει. Clemens ubi supra.*

‡ *Maximus Tyrius* gives them the same name as *Clemens*, Ἀθάνατοι δεύτεροι: *Capella* calls them *Secundæ Beatitatis Numina*, and the *Poets* sometimes *Plebs Superûm*. The nature of them is thus well described by *Apuleius*; *Sunt genere animalia, ingenio rationabilia, animo passiva, corpore aëria, tempore æterna. Apul. de Deo Socrat. Iamblic. de Myster. Martian. Capell. L. 2. Plat. in Timæo. Plut. de Defect. Orac. August. de Civ. Dei. L. 8. c. 16. Id. L. 9. c. 8.*

Christian Miracles considered. 221

“ If indeed, says he, “ Dæmons are luxurious
 “ and wicked ; if they are merciless and savage;
 “ if they are haters of men, and take a pleasure
 “ in their ignorance and destruction ; then their
 “ Gods have some claim to this rank, and we
 “ cannot easily dispute it :” and it is upon this
 footing that with many others he brings *Apollo*
 into the number, who for receiving his friend
Crasus's money, and then betraying him, de-
 served no better name.

All this is exactly of a piece with what he
 had said before about Oracles, and only proves
 against the *Heathens* that if their Gods were
 Dæmons,

Ἐἰ γὰρ ὅν δαίμονες λήγροι τὲ καὶ μιαινοὶ, ἔστι μὲν ἐφου-
 ρεῖν καὶ ἀναφάνδον ἔγω, κατὰ πόλεις δαίμονας ἐπιχωρίας,
 τιμὴν ἐπιδρεπομένους. *Clemens ubi supra.*

After this he gives a list of Gods in several Countries
 that were of this character, and then mentioning the
 thirty thousand Gods of *Hesiod*, which in the Verses are
 called Dæmons, and Protectors of men, he says,

Εἰ δ' ἄρα καὶ εἰσὶ φύλακες, ἔκ ἐννοία τῇ πρὸς ὑμᾶς
 περιπαθεῖς, τῆς δὲ ὑμεδαυτῆς ἀπωλείας ἐχόμενοι &c.

And then mentioning the gluttony of these Gods of
Hesiod, he goes on to others, but still in the same train
 of reasoning from what the *Heathens* themselves had said
 of them :

Φέρε δὲ ὅν καὶ τὺτο προσθῶμεν, ὡς ἀπάνθρωποι, καὶ μι-
 γάνθρωποι δαίμονες εἶεν ὑμῶν οἱ θεοὶ &c. *Clem. ubi supra.*

Demons, they must be Demons of the bad sort; and he makes so frequent use of the particle *if* in every step that is taken, as plainly shews this to be the general plan on which he was confuting the Pagan pretensions. — afterwards indeed taking what he had said for granted that the Gods of the *Heathens* had always been the Authors of wicked actions, he changes the Heathen sense of Demons, and adds the Christian, in which they are always reckoned bad; and here it is no wonder that he should be in earnest, and readily acquiesce in this great principle of our Religion; whereas if it had been objected to him by his Opposers, or the nature of his discourse had led him to shew that their Gods or *Apollo* had been ever (as was sometimes true) the Authors of good actions; then this way of reasoning would never have been made use of, and we should never have heard any thing of *Clemens's* falling in with the popular belief of Oracles.

And now after this plain and true account of the matter, what will our Antagonist say? and what reason will he give for the change of opinion imputed here to *Clemens*? that the Oracle delivered to *Cræsus* had in it so many singular

singular and extraordinary circumstances as made it beyond the extent of human knowledge? this indeed would be a reason for the greatest Infidel's conviction, but then it is a reason that *Clemens* not only never *did* admit, but in reality never *could*; he having left it on record as it were on purpose to avoid every possible misrepresentation, that neither truth nor profit could ever proceed from *Dæmoniacal* interpositions.

What will he say then? that *Clemens* maintained that all the Gods of the *Gentens* were Devils, and of consequence that *Apollo* was of that number? Suppose we take this for granted, though it does not appear to be true, what is the consequence? that the *Dæmon Apollo* delivered Oracles? But why so? had not *Clemens* expressly denied this *before*? and where is the necessity for his admission of it *now*? is not his

rea-

² Τὶ δ' αὖ καὶ ἀληθεύσαιεν οἱ κακοὶ (δαίμονες) ἢ πάντα εὖ ὠφελεῖσθαιεν; *Clem. ubi supra.*

Oenomaus the great derider of Oracles has something so very like this last sentence, that the most Incurious can scarce help seeing it, and including them both under the same character.

Euseb. Præp. Ev. L. 5. c. 21.

224. *The Heathen rejection of the*

reasoning altogether as consistent, if he only for the sake of Argument took the *Heathen* account of *Apollo* for granted, as if he really believed it? and if it is, what possible reason can there be to make him contradict himself?

But it may not be so proper to imagine, as it would be somewhat difficult to determine what a Jesuit *would* say, let us rather hear therefore what he *has* said, and see whether any thing more conclusive can be drawn. —

“*Clemens*, says he, in his *Admonitio ad Gentes* “relates all the sorts of Divination which were “in use amongst the *Heathens*; and as there “were some that were only Impostures, without entering at all into the particulars, or “enquiring whether these Impostures came “from Devils or only from Men, he gives this “name to all of them in general.”

This most will think is the very perfection of Jesuitry; but it is not; and I intend to do myself the honour of giving it the last hand, and helping my modest Antagonist to this long contested authority without any mixture or allay.

“Some

“*Reponse a l'Histoire des Oracles*, Vol. 1. ch. 3.

"Some were, says he, Impostures,"^b and "therefore *Clemens* called them all so." Now would it not have been better for him to have begun at the other end, and said, *Clemens* believed that *one* Oracle proceeded from Demons, and therefore he believed *all* did; By this means *Clemens* would be all his own, *without the least tincture* of infidelity, and upon as certain grounds as those he has him upon at present.

As this is so plain and natural a method, one would wonder he did not take it:—it could not be for want of *assurance*; for this a monstrous assertion in the same sentence precludes; which is, "that *Clemens* does not enquire whether these "Impostures came from Devils, or only from "Men"; whereas it is most certain that *Clemens* particularly asserts the contrary in almost every period

^a *Reponse* &c. ubi supra.

^b Τὸ αὐτόθι μαντίον, αὐτῇ δρῶν μεμαρσάμενον, μύθοις γεγρακόσι καταλείψατε.

Καὶ δὴ τῷ τύφῳ κενὰ οὐκ ἐμὲν, ὅμως δ' ἔν, διελήλειται τοῖς ἰδίῳις συνεκρέυσαντα μύθοις.

Μανικὰ ταῦτα, ὡς ἀληθῶς, ἀνθρώπων ἀπίστων Σοφιστήρια.

Clem. ubi supra.

What could an *Oenomaus*, a *Lucian*, or a *Cicero* say more; and yet it is no wonder that our Antagonist claims him,

P

since

226 *The Heathen rejection of the*

period of his Narration,* and sums up the whole with an exprefs declaration, that every species of Oracles was the invention of Men.

I must now therefore beg pardon for the presumption just mentioned, and own the vanity of any endeavours to inform a Jesuit in his art; *my* weak attempts were for putting on at least an appearance of truth; *his* are for making open and glaring falshood subservient to his ends.

But by a fate very justly attending on such perverse endeavours, one cannot help being pleased with reflecting, that the case by his success would be rather made worse, than mended; and that his very falshood, if granted, would end in his confusion. For what then would become of the Venerable *Clemens*? and where would be the marks of his sincerity or care? who then would admit the testimony of so fluctuating a Guide? or rather who could ever collect, what that testimony was?

in

since he has claimed * *Cicero* upon much such weak suspitions; and from a passage only in his 2^d Book of Laws which has been before † considered, ventures to rank him without

* *Reponse a l'Hist. des Orac.* Vol. 2. p. 2. ch. 9.

† Ch. 5.

In short if we dispute for ever about this important point, we must say at last, either that *Clemens* means, that all Oracles were Impostures, or he does not; and in either case the conclusion must be strong to our purpose: Speak out then, ambiguous Jesuit! sum up the evidence your self; and declare with the sincerity that becomes a Disciple of *Christ*; and not of your *Order*, which of these you admit: if the former, the testimony of *Clemens* is against you; if the latter, it is of no effect.

And now being come to a conclusion of this matter, I doubt not but it will seem matter of surprize to some, for what end this contention is raised by the Jesuits, and what view any order of men can have in thus openly and palpably disputing against truth and reason. But mistake them not, they are not used to act without views, as appears by the following inference.

“ Though
out any hesitation in the class of *Diviners*: to all which I need at present only say, what I can with great justice; that if he thinks *Oenomaus* and *Lucian* worth having, I will undertake to help him to them upon the same foundation.

“ Though the Catholic Church has in all
 “ ages and does at present possess the power of
 “ casting out Devils ; yet this power never is,
 “ nor indeed ever was found in the whole
 “ body of any false or Heretical Religion :
 “ because God who is the sovereign Truth,
 “ cannot authorize error and falshood.”

At last therefore the great mystery is discovered, and it appears to be *worth the while* to have laboured so long in the mine of falshood : the Catholic cause is to triumph over Heresie, and it matters not how the victory is obtained ; the *means* are insignificant, if the *end* is glorious.

I have now done with the testimony of the Fathers : but that I may not be misinterpreted in so nice and critical a Point, I must beg leave more particularly to mention those cases, in which it is not to be looked upon as altogether unexceptionable ; and they are in general all those, where their great zeal for the Church had a stronger influence on them than it ought : on which account I have in some places of this work not brought in their authority as decisive ;
 and

^a *Reponse a l'Hist. des Orac. V. 2. p. 1. c. 19.*

and have even hinted some doubts about it, when the whole stream of their testimonies is opposed to the single one of *Marcellinus* in the third Chapter. For the rest, no one has a greater veneration for their singular Piety and Learning than myself; and in all other cases, where this principle cannot be supposed to inflame their passions, and darken their judgement, I see no reasonable exception to their authority.

Before I leave this head it may not be improper to give an instance of the uniform nature of Truth, in reply to an objection urged by the answerer of *Fontenelle* against those, who will not admit the testimony of the Fathers on the occasion just mentioned: which is the strong presumption of the truth of what the Fathers have alledged in relation to the casting out Devils, as none of the *Heathens* ever accused them of Imposture.

With this observation *Le Clerc* was so much puzzled, that though he wanted not inclination to diminish the credit of the Fathers, and has on this very Subject treated them with very little ceremony and respect; yet he is forced

to have recourse to his *perhaps's*, his never failing refuge on distressful occasions.

“ Perhaps (says he) either through contempt or neglect the *Heathens* did not read the books of the *Christians* : perhaps these indigent boasters of Miracles often met with severe mortifications from the *Heathens*, of which no account has been transmitted to posterity.”

It would be easy for an uncomplaisant Antagonist, or one that wanted the proper deference to *Le Clerc's* judgement, to answer his two *perhaps's* by a third ; which is, that perhaps neither of them might be true ; and what is worse, that the first of them could be nothing to the purpose, if it was : because, though the *Heathens* did not much regard the books of the *Christians*, yet they could not help being sometimes spectators of their actions, and if they were not of so extraordinary a nature as is supposed, the same objection would remain. —

The

• Peut être ne lisoient ils pas les livres des Chrétiens, ou par mépris, ou par negligence. peut être aussi que ces vanteurs indiscrets de miracles ont souvent eu des rudes mortifications de la part des Payens, des quelles l'Histoire n'a pas été transmise à la posterité.

Bibliothèque Choise. Tom. 23. Art. 3.

Christian Miracles considered. 231

The proper reply therefore to it is, what has been already settled in the third Chapter, that the *Heathens* had a low opinion of Miracles in general; and not improbably a much lower one of this species of them in particular; of which the impudent Epigram in the Margin^s is a most remarkable instance.

It is supposed by ^s some to be made on a Christian Exorcist, and that *Lucian* the Author of it was sometime a ^h *Christian*, or at least intimately acquainted with the affairs of that sect, which he constantly ridicules; but whether either of these suppositions be true or not, yet the plain consequence seems to be, that any *Heathen*, who could talk thus of the power of Exorcists, and think, that to *cast or stink Devils out* was much the same thing, would not give him-

Δαίμονα πολλὰ λάλων Ὀζόσμομος Ἐξοριστὴς
ἔξεβαλ', ἐκ ὄρων, ἀλλὰ κόπρων δυνάμεις.

Lucian. Oper. V. 2. ad finem. Antholog. L. 2.

The following is a bad translation,

*Oris odore gravi, non sacris damona verbis
Exorcista olido depulit ore loquens.*

Joh. Benedict interp.

^s *Reponse a l' Hist. des Orac. V. 2. c. 18.*

^s *Cave's Primitive Christianity, part 3. ch. 2.*

Melange, Critique de Literature. Art. 60.

232 *The Heathen rejection of the*

himself much trouble to oppose the primitive *Christians* on this head; or confront any pretensions to so trifling an accomplishment.

Neither is this only the *single* intimation of a loose and profligate *Epicurean*, disposed to ridicule every thing that had a religious appearance; but the *uniform* and *general* voice of Pagan Antiquity.

The graveⁱ *Plutarch* has delivered down to us the method of curing the possessed by the repetition of the *Æphesian* names; which were only a few barbarous and unmeaning words,^k that could not possibly be of any efficacy to bring about the effect.

Accordingly we are assured at large by *Hippocrates*, that nothing was more common than the practise of casting out Devils, and that these Devils had different names according to the different symptoms of the Persons supposed

ⁱ Ὅσπερ γὰρ οἱ Μαγοὶ τὰς δαιμονιζομένους κελεύουσι τὰ Ἐφέσια γράμματα πρὸς αὐτὰς καταλέγειν καὶ ὀνομάζειν &c. *Plut. Sympotiac.* 7.

^k They are these ἄσκι, κατάσκι, αἰξ, τέτραξ, δαίμονα-μενεύς, αἰσιον. *Hesych. Lexic.*

^l *Hippocrat. de Morbo Sacro.*

posed to be ^m possessed; yet that this practice was held in little esteem; that the Demons in effect, were only natural disorders; and those who attempted to eject them, were only Hypocrites and Impostors.

The sage council of Philosophers in the *Philopseudes* of *Lucian* do not seem to agree with *Hippocrates* about this matter, and by their discourse it should seem that there was something in it more than natural; yet notwithstanding this, there are so many ridiculous circumstances mentioned, as makes it impossible to think, that it could be looked upon as a thing of much importance; Nay though one of this sage Council actually cast out a Devil himself, and another saw a Smoak-coloured Devil ⁿ leave the Patient, yet in neither case, as there related, is there any room for us to think that they at all deserved a Wise man's attention.

The

^m If the possessed made a noise like a Horse, the Devil in him was *Neptune*, if they imitated a Goat, it was the Mother of the Gods; if they kicked and foamed, it was *Mars*; if they spoke feebly, it was *Apollo Nomius* &c.

Hippocrat. ibid.

ⁿ Ἐγὼ δ' ὦν καὶ εἶδον (δαίμονα) ἐξίοντα μέλανα καὶ καπνῶδη τὴν Χροιάν.

Lucian Philopseud.

234 *The Heathen rejection of the*

The receipt, which *Josephus* has preserved to us, for bringing a Devil through the Nose by a ring with a root in it that *Salomon* had discovered, may very well be reduced to this head; as there cannot be a more probable reason assigned for his diminution of this sort of miracles, as well as others, * than his so frequently accomodating himself to the Pagan manners.

The whole of what has been said on this matter may be illustrated by a short parallel instance, which will be considered more at large hereafter. — Among the various instances of Exorcism pretended to by the Catholics, that of Father *Gaufré* is remarkable; who being sent to cast out a Devil called *Arfaza*, which was got into the foot of Sister *Bonaventure* a Nun; there ensued so peculiar a conversation, and

* *Joseph. Antiquit. Judaic. L.8.*

* There may indeed be another reason assigned for this strange conduct in *Josephus* which has been intimated before, * namely, that as a Jew he would naturally endeavour to depreciate the proof of Miracles in opposition to Christ; but this reason never can be admitted while there is any dispute left about his † celebrated testimony in favour of the Messiah.

* Chap. 3.

† See *Daubuz pro testimonio Josephi.*

and such struggles for superiority of complaisance between the Devil and the Father, as were really more *unaccountable* than the possession itself.

^a Now to say in this case that the Protestants have not opposed this relation, therefore it is true, is much the same sort of reasoning, as that just now made use of by the Answerer of *Fontenelle*; whereas the truth of the whole matter seems to be, that the protestants in this case acted as the *Heathens* did in the other *i. e.* either never heard of the thing at all, or could not think it of importance enough to confute, if they did.

I shall end this subject with observing, that if our learned ^o Metropolitan, who, as we have already seen, was of a contrary opinion to this, had thought proper to give us the reasons which per-

^p Recit veritable de ce qui s'est fait et passé dans exorcismes de plusieurs religieuses de la ville de Louciers, en presence de Monsieur le Penitencier d'Evreux, et de Monsieur de Gaufré. p. 30, 31. *Edit. Par. 1643.*

⁴ As to the causes of Oracles it has been much disputed, whether they were the revelations of *Dæmons*, or only the delusion of crafty *Priests*. *Van-Dale* has wrote a large Treatise in defence of the latter Opinion, but his Arguments are not of such force, but that they might without difficulty be refuted, if either my design required, or time permitted me to answer them.

persuaded him; they would probably have been of a very different nature; and would either have given us much greater trouble to confute; or, which is more likely, would have enclined us to a different perswasion: but as he has not, our conclusion seems at present to be well founded.

Having now said as much as was necessary of Oracles, I must remind the Reader, that though I have now finished those arguments, the tendency of which has been to shew what little reasons the Heathens had to think that Miracles had ever been wrought amongst them at all; yet it does not of consequence follow, that they would certainly make use of the light which was held out to them, and be convinced as much as we are now of the reality of this truth: but still whether they were or no, their esteem of Miracles will be but little encreased: for if ever they were *alarmed* by an appearance which they could not tell how to account for, or *over-born* by the weight of such testimony as they could not tell how to invalidate, the principle of Magic was one general recourse. — This principle will be the subject of the next Chapter.

CHAP. VII.

*Of the influence which Magic must have
over the Conduct of the Heathens.*

THERE is nothing more unaccountable than the Principle, which we are now going to consider; nothing, which has made such a strange and unusual progress from the natural to prodigious, from sacred to accursed.

The Origin of Magic was amongst the Eastern Nations, where those, who professed it, were Priests, and chiefly concerned about religion: this is what we are expressly assured of by *Plato*, *Lucian*,^a and *Apuleius*: some others indeed add that all professors of Learning

^a *Μαγία Ζυροάσσει &c. ἐστὶ δὲ τὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ Σιγανία.*

Plat. Alcibiad. c. i.

Οἱ καλυμμένοι μάγοι, γίνονται τὸ τοῦ μαντικῆς, καὶ θεοῦ ἀνακείμενοι παρὰ τοὺς Πέρσας, καὶ Πάρθους καὶ Βακτρίους.
Lucian. in Macrobiosis.

Perfarum Linguâ Magus est, qui nostra Sacerdos.

Apul. Apolog.

ing or Philosophy were called ^b Magi; but as the best and most important branch of all Learning was Religion, it is probable, that there was no Philosopher in the *East*, that did not make Theology a principal part of his Study; so that we are informed by a *Roman* Historian, who lived many ages after their institution, that they delivered their Learning successively from one Generation to another, and that even in his time, a multitude sprung from one and the same race lived in Towns without walls, and were dedicated to the Rites and Worship of the Gods ^c

Incantation likewise or the Charms of words, which in process of time was made a part of this science, was once held in the same repute; and *Pythagoras* (who with most of the *Greek* Philosophers travelled into the *East* to

^a *Diogen. Laert. in proem. Suidas in voc. Magos.*

^c Quæ illi (Magi) cum disciplinis præsentendi futura per suam quisque progeniem posteris ætatibus tradunt. Ex eo per sæcula multa ad præsens una eademque propiâ multitudo creata Deorum cultibus dedicatur.

Hi aucti paulatim in amplitudinem gentis solidæ concesserunt, et nomen: villasque inhabitantes nulla murorum firmitudine communitas, et legibus suis uti permitti, religionis respectu sunt honorati. *Amm. Marcellin. L. 23.*

Christian Miracles considered. 239

to learn among other things this art of Magic^a) is said by *Malchus* to have made use of and approved them; "He comforted and appeased, (says he) the distempered minds, some by Verse and Magic, others by Music.

And that this charm of Verse or Words was a reputable thing we are further informed by *Plato*; who speaking of *Zamolxis* the Scholar and attendant of *Pythagoras*, who travelled with him into *Egypt* on the account just mentioned, says, that He used to cure the Soul with the charms of Verse, but that these Charms were good words.

The blood of *Ulysses* is made likewise in *Homer* to stop by ^b Incantation; and this at the same time is mentioned in common with other medicines that are reputable and useful.

How

Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 30. c. 1.

• Τὰς ψυχὰς νοσήσας παρμυθεῖτο, τὰς μὲν ἐπωδαῖς καὶ μαγείαις, τὰς δὲ Μουσικῇ. *Porphyr. vit. Pythag.*

• *Herodot. L. 4.*

• Θεραπεύεσθαι δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἴφη, ὃ μακάριον, ἐπωδαῖς τιθεῖ, τὰς δὲ ἐπωδὰς τὰς λόγους εἶναι καλὰς.

Plat. apud Apul. Apolog.

• Ὀττιλὴν δ' Ὀδυσῆος αἰμύμοις ἀντιδίοιο

Δῆσαν ἐπισταμένως, ἐπαιοῖδ' δ' αἶμα κελαινόν

Ἔσχον.

Hom. Odyss. L. 1. v. 456.

How indeed these with other parts of Magic came afterwards into disrepute and were publicly condemned by the laws;¹ and how the Schools of Magic in ^k after times were so widely different from those of the preceding, and indeed from that institution, which we have just now seen remained so incorrupt to the time of *Marcellinus*, we are not now to enquire: the reason mentioned by *Bekker* in the Margin will perhaps satisfy some, and others may probably think that too much has already been said: let it suffice therefore to have observed thus far, that Charms and Magic were at first held innocent things, that they were afterwards held

¹ *Leon. Imperat. Constitut. 5.* Περὶ τῆς καλῶς τῶν μαγικῶν ἡρώων.

² *Ruffin. Eccles. Hist. L. 2. c. 26.*

³ Or il y a d'apparence qu' après les Mages furent parvenus à une haute estime parmi le Peuple, et à la cour; leur art se trouva insuffisant pour maintenir leur réputation. Alors ils commencèrent à se servir d'artifices, et de tromperies. Il y en eut même quelques unes, qui joignant la malignité à l'artifice, firent un mauvais usage de cet art, et n'épargnerent ni le bien, ni le sang de quantité des Personnes. De sort que d'un cote les Payens honorant fort ces Gens à cause de leur esprit, et de leur subtilité, ils les méprisoient pourtant à un autre regard, et avoient de l'aversion pour eux.

Bekker, Le Monde enchanté, L. I. c. 4.

Christian Miracles considered. 241

held in general abhorrence,^m and that, even so early as the laws of the Twelve Tables, it was capital for any one to charm his Neighbour's field.ⁿ

This mention of so severe a law against a thing seemingly so unable to do hurt as Magic, would make it natural to enquire farther, if it was not professedly our present purpose, into the reputed power of this art; which by the whole

^m *Tacit. annal.* L. 2. 32. *Id. Hist.* L. 2. c. 22. *Sueton. vit. Tiber.* *Id. vit. Vitell.* *Tertull. de Idol.* c. 9. *Cod. Theod.* L. 9. *Tit. de Malef.* *ibid.* *Leg.* 3, 5, 6, 7, &c.

Ars Mathematica damnabilis est atque interdicta omnino. Cod. Just. L. 2. T. 18.

Yet this was but a species of Magic, the whole was of still worse repute, and the practice of it more severely threatened.

Multi magicis artibus ausi elementa turbare, vitas infantium labefactare non dubitant, et Manibus audent ventilare, ut quisque suis conficiat malis artibus inimicos: hos, quoniam naturæ peregrini sunt, feralis pestis absumat.

Cod. Theod. ubi supra.

Eorum est scientia punienda, et severissimis merito legibus vindicanda, qui aut magicis accincti artibus, aut contra salutem hominum moliti, pudicos animos ad libidinem deflectisse deteguntur. *ibid.*

ⁿ Si quis alienas fruges incantasset, Kapital esto.

242 *The Heathen rejection of the*

whole stream of Antiquity is delivered down to us as working the most extraordinary wonders; and the very charming of the field just now mentioned is supposed to mean nothing less than the moving of the field itself, or at least the fruits that grew on it, to a different place, according to that of the Poet.

Atque fatas alio vidi traducere messes.

Neither is this a singular effect of the Magical art mentioned only by *Virgil*, but a power and efficacy of which all the Poets are full; and they are full of it not only because it made part of the marvellous, and so was accomodated to their profession, but because it was a notion that

• *Theocrit. Virg. Tibull. Lucan, Ovid, &c. Wier. de Præstig. Dæmon. Del Rio. Disquisit. Magic. Plin. N. Hist. Apul. Metamorph. L. I.*

The Enchantress in the last mentioned Poet speaks thus herself

— Cum volui, ripis mirantibus, annes
In fontes rediëre suos; concussaquo fisco,
Stantia concutia cantu freta; nubila pello,
Nubilaque induco: Ventos abigoque feroque;
Vipereas rumpo verbis et carmine fautes:
Vivæque saxa, sua convulsaque robora terræ,
Et Sylvas moveo, jubeoque tremiscere montes;
Te quoque, Luna, traho. —

Ovid. Metam. L. 7.

And

that generally, or at least in some measure, prevailed in most parts of the world.

- We have yet seen, in what has been hitherto observed of Magic, the conjunction of only two Sciences in its support, Physick and Religion; afterwards indeed the art of Astrology came into its assistance; and this was such an assistance, as it was above mortality to resist; and it is no wonder that it should have such an influence over the hearts of men, when it had joined, as *Pliny* most excellently says, three such *imperious* Sciences together.

Whether this observation of *Pliny* gave the occasion to the threefold distinction of Magic into

And the last mentioned Prose-writer is not at all behind the Poet, since on account of such a very absurd relation that his simple companion could say of it; *Nihil hac fabula fabulosius, &c.*

He says, "Ego vero nihil impossibile arbitror, sed ut-
" cunque fata decreverunt, ita cuncta mortalibus evenire;
" nam et mihi et tibi et cunctis hominibus multa usu
" venire mira et pene infecta, quæ tamen ignaro relata
" fidem perdant." — Sed et ego credo tamen, &c.

• Auctoritatem ei maximam fuisse nemo miretur, quandoquidem sola artium tres alias imperiosissimas humanæ mentis complexa in unam redigit. *Plin. N. Hist. L. 30. c. 1.*

into the natural, the Astrological, and Religious, which some Moderns have made use of; and whether these parts formerly belonged to three different professions, is not material now to examine: — It is enough that we are assured that the religious Magic is frequently represented as able to perform things above the power of nature; and it is represented so not only by the primitive^a Christians in their disputes with the Heathens, who indeed are almost perpetually decrying it; but likewise by the Heathens of almost every Country, and every age.

Plato indeed and his^r Disciples are generally more exprefs than the other sect of Philosophers in regard to this matter; as they in particular had a system thoroughly accomodated to the solution of its most extraordinary Operations: but though the *Platonists* are for the most part more

^a *Lactant. div. inst. L. 1. 2. passim. Tertull. in Apolog. Minuc. Fel. Cyprian de Idol. van. Euseb. Dem. Evan. L. 3. c. 6.*

^r *Porphyr. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang. L. 4. 5. 6. Iamblich. de Myst. passim. Apul. Apolog. Id. de Deo Socrat.*

^s *Ἄλλα φαύλος μὲν δαίμονας ἐν Ἐμπειδοκλῆς μόνον ἀπέλιπεν, ἄλλα καὶ Πλάτων, καὶ Ξενοκράτης, καὶ Χρύσιππος· ἐπεὶ δὲ Δημόκριτος &c. Plut. de defect. Orac.*

^t *Ἡσίοδος δὲ καθαρῶς ἐξέθηκε δαίμονας πολλὰς καὶ ἀγαθὰς· Id. ibid.*

more full to this point, yet the other sects are by no means silent as to its foundation: *Plutarch* in a treatise, otherwise sufficiently dark, has plainly and expressly assured us of the truth of this; has mentioned many of the antient Philosophers, and some of them of opposite principles, who believed the interposition of good and bad Dæmons in human affairs; and this opinion the bulk of the Heathens in general following, have left the world no room to doubt of this matter.

After what has been hitherto said therefore, I need at present select but one remarkable passage; but it is so remarkable as to prove beyond all contradiction the truth of the point in question: the passage is in the answer of *Apolonius* at his trial before *Domitian*: "If I am
" a Magician,* (says he) how will you bind me?
" but if you bind me, how am I a Magician?"

From

He says likewise in the same book that this opinion was very antient. *Plut.* p. 415. 417. Edit. fol. *Xylandri*.

* Εἰ μὲν γόητα με ἡγῶ, πῶς δήσεις; εἰ δὲ δήσεις, πῶς γόητα εἶναι φήσεις; *Philost. vit. Ap. L. 7. c. 34.*

This is retorted by *Eusebius*, how skillfully the Reader will easily see after what is said in this Chapter.

Εἰ μὲν ὁ γόης, πῶς λένεται σὺ τὸ σκέλος; εἰ δὲ λένεται, πῶς ὁ γόης; *Euseb. cont. Hieroc. c. 39.*

246 *The Heathen rejection of the*

From this answer we may draw two conclusions, both of them full to our present purpose: one is that which we have just now mentioned; namely, that it was the opinion of the Heathens, that real Miracles were in the power of Magic;* the other, that it was usual to impute to it such operations, as they could not resolve into natural causes.

And

If you are not a Magician, how was your leg freed? But if it was freed; how are you not a Magician? In order to see any force in this we must know, that it depends upon that circumstance in *Apollonius's* life, when he pulled the chain off his leg before *Damis*, to convince him that it was not in the power of men to bind him. *Philostat. L. 7. c. 39.*

* That this was the common opinion in relation to Magicians at this time appears likewise from *Apuleius*.

Sin vero more vulgari eum isti proprie Magum existimant, qui communione loquendi cum diis immortalibus ad omnia quæ velit incredibili quadam vi cantaminum polleat &c. *Apul. Apolog.*

¹ *Iamblich. de Myster. l. 3. c. ult. Id. sect. 10. c. 7.*

² *Id. l. 3. c. 13, 14, 15, ad finem. August. de Civ. Dei. L. 10. c. 9. Id. L. 10. c. 18.* Porro si multorum Deorum cultores ab eis facta esse miracula, vel civilium rerum historiae, vel libris magicis, sive quod honestius putant, theurgicis credunt, cur illis literis nolunt credere quibus tanto major debetur fides &c.

How

Christian Miracles considered. 247

And because of the two sorts of Magic in use amongst the Antients, one of them was called *Θεγγυία, or the invocation of good Demons, which was in such esteem amongst them, that no one could be accused for the practice of it; the other was called *Γογγυία, or the invocation of bad Demons, together with some other magical rites and pretensions; this being

How differently from this does *Lucan* speak of the second kind of Magic here mentioned, and how warmly does he accuse the younger *Pompey* as sinking beneath the dignity of his great Ancestor, chiefly for consulting the Witch *Eriphio* before the battle of *Pharfalia*, rather than more established and more reputable Oracles.

————— *Turba sed mistus inerti*
Sextus erat, magno proles indigna Parente :
Qui stimulante metu fati prænoscere cursus,
Impatiensque moræ, venturisque omnibus æger,
Non tripodas Deli, non Pythia consulit antra ;
Nec quassisse libet, primis quid frugibus altric
Ore Jovis Dodona sonet, quis noscere fibra
Fata queat, quis prodat aues, quis fulgura cali
Servet, et Assyria scrutetur sidera cura ;
Aut si quid tacitum, sed fas erat. Ille supernis
Detestanda Deis, sævorum arcana Mægerum
Noxerat, et tristes sacris fixalibus aras,
Umbrarum Ditisque fidem : miseroque liquebat
Scire parum superos. &c.

Lucan. Pharf. Lib. 6.

248 *The Heathen rejection of the*

being generally had in the utmost detestation must have been the crime, that was laid to *Apollonius's* charge.

From this whole account therefore we may conclude, that the Heathens contempt of Miracles was in this case so strong, that even their own Philosopher could not escape their fury; that his pretensions to them were so far from raising him in the esteem of many, that they effectually *sunk* his credit, and *ruined* his fortunes; that when the maintenance only of his doctrines and opinions would have given him a place amongst the *Venerable Sages* of Antiquity, the addition of his miracles debased him to the rank of *black Magicians* and *horrid Enchanters*.

What reason indeed there was for this severe accusation of a Person, whose life (as related by *Philostratus*) is innocent enough; or how in some future times it happened that this Philosopher again got the ascendant, and by some fortunate juncture of affairs rose to the dignity of a * *God*, who had once been reputed *worse than*

* *Philostat. vit. Apollon. Lib. 1. c. 4. Lib. 8. c. ult. Lactant. Div. Instit. L. 5. c. 3. Vopisc. in vit. Aurelian. Lamprid, in vit. Alex. Severi.*

than Man, there is now no time to consider; but his whole life and example will ever be a most illustrious proof in what little esteem his Miracles once were amongst the Heathens, and to what impious means they once ascribed them.

But after all that has been hitherto said of the reputed power of Magic, and all that might yet be added, if it would not be tiresome to the Reader, I suppose it will still be asked how these things could possibly be believed by reasonable creatures? to which if we should return no answer, the subject we are treating of, would receive no detriment at all; to establish which, the opinions of the Heathens, not the reasons of them, are necessary; the Reader might however in some measure have guessed at the foundation of this opinion in what has been already advanced; and because it is of some use to my present design in another light, I must inform him, that the things I have mentioned, or much greater, if possible, might be believed by men, who had invented a system that was perfectly adapted to the solution of every Event, how miraculous so ever it appeared.

But

250 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But before I consider this at large, I must beg leave to observe, that there were many cases in which they did *not* require it's assistance, which yet were as extraordinary as those in which they *did*: I will mention two of them because they are recorded by *Varro*, whom *Cicero* calls the most learned of the *Romans*, but whose learning did not free him, so much as it ought, from all belief in this art.

Nay, so far from freeing him from *all* belief in this art, that it did not free him from *any*; or if it did, he must have had an *original fund* of it, inconceivable indeed; since he did not only at last believe the story of *Circe* according

Hoc Varro ut adstruat, commemorat alia non minus incredibilia de Maga illa famosissima Circe, quæ socios quoque Ulyssis mutavit in bestias; et de Arcadibus, qui sorte ductâ transnatabant quoddam stagnum, atque ibi convertebantur in Lupos, et cum similibus feris per illius regionis deserta vivebant: si vero carne vescerentur humanâ rursus post novem annos eodem renatato stagno reformabantur in homines. Denique etiam nominatim expressit quendam Dementetum, cum gustasset de sacrificio quod Arcades, immolato puero, Deo suo Lycæo facere solebant, in Lupum fuisse mutatum, et anno decimo in figuram propriam restitutum ad pugillatum se exercuisse, et Olympico vicisse certamine.

Varro apud August. de Civ. Dei L. 18. c. 17.

ing to the letter, and the conversion of Men into Wolves, which even the credulous *Pliny* could laugh at; but asserts likewise that Charms were a cure for that distemper, which without exception is the most stubborn and obstinate of all that are incident to human nature.

But let us see whether we can have a better opinion of his judgment from the two instances we proposed: the first of them is, that when the *Trallians* were solicitous about the event of the *Mithridatic War*, and endeavoured to know what it would be by a sort of Magic which was called *ὑδρομαντεία*, or Divination by Water; the Boy who beheld in the Water the image of *Mercury* foretold in one hundred and sixty Verses what was to come to pass.^b

The

^a The relation of this last story of *Demenetetus Pliny* introduces in this manner, "Mirum est quo procedat Græca credulitas! nullum tam impudens mendacium est, ut teste careat. *Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 8. c. 22.*

^a Sic Theophrastus Ischiadices sanari; Cato prodidit luxatis membris carmen auxiliari, Marcus Varro podagris. *Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 38. c. 2.*

^b Memini me apud Varronem Philosophum virum accuratissime doctum atque eruditum, cum alia hujusmodi, tum hoc etiam legere: Trallibus de eventu Mithridatici belli magicâ percontatione consulentibus, puerum in aquâ simulacrum Mercurii contemplantem, quæ futura erant, centum sexaginta versibus cecinisse. *Apul. Apolog.*

252 *The Heathen rejection of the*

The other is of *T. Fabius*, an acquaintance of *Cicero*, who, having lost a sum of money, came to consult *Nigidius* about it, and he making use of the same sort of Divination, the prophetic Boys told him where part of it was buried, and where the rest was disposed of.^d

Can any one wonder, after this, at the common opinion that prevailed in the World about the

^c *Ciceron. Epist. ad familiar. L. 5. Epist. 18.*

^d Itemque Fabium, cum quingentos denarios perdidisset, ad Nigidium consultum venisse: ab eo pueros carmine instinctos indicasse ubi locorum defossa esset crumena cum parte eorum, cæteri ut forent distributi; unum etiam denarium ex eo numero habere *M. Catonem Philosophum*: quem se a pedissequo in stipem *Apollinis* accepisse *Cato* confessus est. *Apul. Apolog.*

N. B. In this Divination by Water the Boys were supposed to behold the Images of the Gods; on which account *Saint Austin* says of *Numa*, who practiced this sort of Divination, that it was because he could have no better, and that these images of the Gods were in effect no other than the delusions of Devils.

Nam et ipsa *Numa*, ad quem nullus Dei Propheta, nullus sanctus Angelus mittebatur, hydromantiam facere compulsus est, ut in aqua videret imagines Deorum, vel potius ludificationes Dæmonum, &c.

August. De Civ. D. L. 7. c. 35.

Christian Miracles considered. 253

the unlimited power of Magic, when he sees the most *enlightned* spirits of Antiquity so readily admit it? We have intimated before in what esteem *Varro* was held by his Countrymen on account of his Learning, and *Nigidius* was not at all inferiour to him, if *Cicero's* letters to him are to be reckoned at all sincere; and yet we see in the instances before us how *ridiculously* they were sometimes employed; how

• He calls him, *Omnium sanctissimum, doctissimumque, sibi que amicissimum.* *Cicero.* Ep. ad Famil. L. 4. E. 13.

And yet see what different sentiments of Magic another Heathen expressed, who in all probability was not less under the influence of vulgar errors than either *Nigidius* or *Varro*; for thus the great master of the Art of Love most agreeably and poetically rallies the inefficacy of Magic in the cure of that headstrong and irregular passion.

Viderit, Hæmonia si quis mala pabula terre

Et Magicas artes posse juvare putat.

Ista veneficii vetus est via: Noster Apollo

Innocuam sacro carmine monstrat opem.

Me duce, non tumulo prodire jubebitur Umbra:

Non anus infami carmine rumpet humum.

Non seges ex aliis alios transibit in agros:

Nec subito Phæbi pallidus orbis erit.

Ut solet æquoreas ibis Tyberinus in undas:

Ut solet in Niveis Luna vehetur equis.

Nulla recantatas deponent pectora curas;

Nec fugiet vivo sulphure victus amor.

Quid

254 *The Heathen rejection of the*

how little they had profited by their stock of knowledge, and how subject they still were to the prejudices and prepossessions of vulgar minds.

But *Varro*, it will be said, the illustrious *Varro*, the pride of the *Roman* Learning, and the great luminary of Antiquity could not surely be in earnest in these trifling relations, and some other account must be given of his conduct; yet we have seen him joined with some excellent^f company on a like occasion already: and there are more of the same sort in the *Philopseudes* of *Lucian*; Men^s who were

*Quid te Phasiacæ juverunt gramina terra,
Cum cuperes patriâ, Colchi, manere doma?
Quid tibi profuerint, Circe, Perseides Herba,
Cum sua Noritias abstulit aura rates?
Omnia fecisti, ne Callidus Hæspes abiret,
Ille dedit certæ linthea plena fugæ:
Omnia fecisti, ne te ferus ureret ignis:
Longus at invito pectore sedit amor.*

Ovid. Remed. Amor.

Afterwards indeed he speaks like *Varro* of the power of *Circe*: so that to reconcile these great names, we need only say that the *Gout* was harder to be cured than *Love*; and that it was the power of this last passion, more than the weakness of Magic, that *Ovid* principally intended to display.

^f *Theophrastus* and *Cato*. p. 251. note a.

were the heads of their respective sects; renowned for Wisdom, and endued with every virtue; some with long beards, ^h grown old in Philosophy: all of very reverend and awful appearances.

And yet all these conspire in the relation of much more extravagant Stories than that just mentioned of *Varro*; and either ⁱ swear to the truth of them in the most solemn and tremendous manner; or else confidently assert that there was no room for incredulity, and that they themselves would never have admitted them, if it had not been for a force of evidence that was not possible to be resisted.^k

Nay

^l Ὁρᾷς οὖν ἄνδρες σοὶ Φημί, πανσόφους, καὶ παναρέτους;
ὃ, τι πρὸ το κεφάλαιον αὐτὸ ἐξ ἐκάστης προαιρέσεως,
αἰδεσίμους ἅπαντας, καὶ μνημονεὺς φόβους τὴν πρόσωπον.

Lucian Philopseud.

^h Ἀξιώπιστος ὁ Εὐκράτης, ὅτω βαθὺν πάγωνα καθει-
μαίνος, ἐξηκοντέτης ἀνὴρ, ἔτι καὶ φιλοσοφία ζυνὼν τὰ
πολλὰ &c. Id. *ibid*.

ⁱ Οὐ γὰρ οἶδα, ὦ ἑταῖρε, ὡς ἐπώμυντο τοῖς πλείστοις;
παραςησάμενος τὰ παιδία &c. Id. *ibid*.

^k Ἐπίστευσα καὶ ἐκινήθην ἐπιπολυ ἀντιχών· τί γὰρ ἴδει
ποιεῖν, αὐτὸν ὁρῶντα διὰ τῷ αἵρος φερόμενον, ἡμέρας ὅσης;
καὶ ἐφ' ὕδατος βαδίζοντα, καὶ διὰ πυρὸς διεξιόντα, καὶ σχολῇ,
καὶ βιάδην; Id. *ibid*.

Nay when *Arignotus* the Pythagorean came in, who was so celebrated on account of his singular Learning¹ and Wisdom that he was held almost Divine, insomuch that *Tychiades*, who was the only Infidel of the party, made sure of his assistance against these lying Philosophers; he not only agrees with them in all their absurd relations, but likewise brings as absurd himself; and confirms the *whole farce* not only by the evidence of eye-sight, but by some of his own operations of the same miraculous nature.^m

But what compleats this matter is, that when *Tychiades*, like a thorough unbeliever, seemed resolved to withhold his assent to all such unaccountable stories in general; they looked upon it as anⁿ impiety almost equal to that of disbelieving a God: and this is a cant that is yet made use of by many.^o

So

¹ Ἀνὴρ δαίμωνιος τὴν σοφίαν. Again, Οἶδα τὸν αὐτίμον ἐπὶ τῇ σοφίᾳ, τὸν ἱερὸν ἐπονομαζόμενον. Id. *ibid.*

^m Ἀλλὰ, ἥδ' ὅς &c. Id. *ibid.*

ⁿ Σὺ μοι δοκεῖς τὰ τοιαῦτα λέγων, εἶδ' εὖ εἶπας πρὸς αὐτοὺς. Id. *ibid.*

^o *Buddei Theses Theolog. de Atheismo et Superstitione. Vossius apud Eundem.*

Christian Miracles considered. 257

So much for the belief of *Varro*: but I am likewise to consider the solution of these events, which is altogether as extraordinary as the events themselves; though, according to *Apuleius*, it was natural enough; since it was only the reduction of the human mind, especially that of Children, to its pristine state; which, when-ever it was by any means done, might then foretel future events, as it was free from the impediments and incumbrances of matter.^p

Nothing, we see, is easier than to impose on ourselves in the confirmation of opinions which we know not how to confute, or are not unwilling should be true; else surely this reason could never have been admitted, and gained such a degree of credit, as we know it has done amongst men.^q

But

^p Quin et illud mecum reputo posse animum humanum, et puerilem præsertim, simplicemque, seu carminum avocamento, sive odorum delinimento soporari, et ad oblivionem præsentium externari; et, paulisper remotâ corporis memoriâ, redigi ac redire ad suam naturam, quæ est immortalis scilicet et divina, atque ita veluti sopore quodam futura rerum præsagire. *Apul. Apolog.*

^q *Plut. de Defect. Orac. Plat. de Republic. L. 9. Cicer. de Divin. L. 1. Philostrat. vit. Apoll. L. 2. Tertull. de Anim. c. 22.*

258 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But as the foretelling of future events was only an inconsiderable part of Magic, and as this sort of reasoning could extend no farther than to Prophecy, it was necessary to invent some other solution of that *prodigious degree* of power, which was ascribed to Magic in its utmost extent: and this was easily found in the existence of Dæmons or inferiour Gods, which we have seen before were generally admitted, but which *Plato* and his followers had more particularly established and maintained.

We
Iamblich. de Myst. Hor. Sat. L. 1. Sat. 10. Tibull. L. 3. Eleg. 4. Theocrit. Idyll. 19. — This is the reason that Quintus gives why Pythagoras forbid beans.

Quod habet inflationem magnam is cibus, tranquillitati mentis quærentis vera contrariam. Quum ergo est somno provocatus animus, &c. *Cic. de Divin. L. 1.*

Ἐν μέσῳ δ' οὖν (δαιμόνιον) ἀμφοτέρων συμπληροῖ, ὥστε τὸ πᾶν αὐτὸ αὐτῷ ξυνδεδέσθαι. Διὰ τὴν καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ, καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη, τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσιῶν, καὶ τὰς τελετὰς, καὶ τὰς ἐπωδαίς, καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν, καὶ γοητείαν. *Plat. in Symposio.*

Per hos (Dæmonas) cuncta denuntiata, et magorum varia miracula, omnesque presagiorum species reguntur. Eorum quippe de numero præditi curant singula, proinde ut est eorum cuique tributa provincia; vel somniliis conformandis, vel extis fissiculandis, vel præpetibus gubernandis, vel oscinibus erudiendis, vel vatibus inspirandis, vel

We only therefore now want to see on what occasions they employed them, and whether they were sufficient for all those wonders, which the objection supposes were so great, that no Person in his senses could believe them; and we find both *Plato* and his faithful *Apuleius* full to this purpose, asserting without any hesitation, that there was nothing, though ever so extraordinary, in the Magical art, but might be solved by their interposition, or rather was entirely owing to it.

Apul.
vel fulminibus jaculandis, vel nubibus coruscandis, cæterisque adeo per quæ futura dignoscimus &c. Horum enim munus et opera atque cura est, ut Annibali somnia orbitatem oculi comminentur, Flaminio extispicia periculum cladis prædicant, Attio Nævio auguria miraculum totis addicant &c. — Postremo cuncta ariolorum præsagia, Tuscorum piacula, fulguritorum bidentalia, carmina Sibyllarum: quæ omnia, ut dixi, mediæ quæpiam potestates inter homines ac Deos obeunt. *Apul. de Deo Socratis.*

If the Reader is not already surfeited, he may see the same opinion insisted by him again in his *Apology*, as he never forgets to do honour to his Master *Plato*.

Quanquam Platoni credam, inter Deos atque homines natura et loco medias quasdam Divorum potestates interlitas, easque divinationes cunctas, et Magorum miracula gubernare. *Apul. Apolog.*

Lactantius confirms this account of *Plato* and *Apuleius*, and so does Saint *Austin*, with many others amongst the Fathers,

260 *The Heavens rejection of the*

Apuleius, indeed, enlarges more on this subject than his Master; but their sentiments are exactly the same; the one only having shewn the influence of this system in a variety of particulars, which the other had done in the general.

If the Reader will but cast an eye on the margin, I dare say that he, who was just now

Eduntque (Dæmones) sæpe prodigia quibus obstupefacti homines fidem commodant simulachris Divinitatis ac Numinis: inde est quod ab Augure lapis novacula incisus est, et quod Juno Veiensis migrare se Romam velle respondit; quod Fortuna muliebris periculum denuntiavit; hinc quod serpens urbem Romam pestilentia liberavit Epidauro accersitus. Nam illuc *Δαίμονας* hac ipse in figura sua sine dissimulatione perductus est; siquidem Legati ad eam rem missi draconem secum miræ magnitudinis attulerunt. *Lactant. Div. Inst. L. 2. c. 16.*

This last circumstance is very curious, and shews what fruit Christianity, grafted on Platonism, can produce. Vid. etiam *August. de Civ. Dei. L. 4. c. 19. Cyprian de Idolor. Vanitat. Minuc. Fel. Octav.*

These two last Authors go hand in hand here, as we see, they had done before, in accounting for the subject of this Treatise; and they imploy their Dæmons to much the same purpose in this place as they had before in the other: yet see how confidently and magnificently they set out.

Spiritus

so diffident about the reception of the numerous Miracles amongst the Heathens, will now begin to wonder that there was not a reception of more; nay he will almost be inclined to think that even the invention of Poets fell short of the invention of Philosophers; that it was not every imagination that could reach the heights it permitted; and that only the strong one of the most exalted Luminary of

Spiritus sunt insinceri et vagi, a cælesti vigore terrenis labibus et cupiditatibus depravati. Isti igitur spiritus posteaquam simplicitatem substantiæ suæ, onusti et immerfi vitijis perdiderunt, ad solatium calamitatis suæ non desinunt perditum jam perdere &c. Eos spiritus Dæmonas esse Poetæ sciunt, Philosophi differunt, &c. Magi quoque non tantum sciunt Dæmonas, sed etiam quicquid miraculi ludunt, per Dæmonas faciunt. &c.

Shakespear.

I have bedimm'd

*The Noontide Sun, call'd forth the mutinous Winds,
And 'twixt the Green Sea, and the azur'd Vault
Set roaring War; to the dread-ratling Thunder
Have I given fire, and risted Jove's stout Oak
With his own bolt: the strong-bas'd promontory
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up
The Pine and Cedar: Graves at my command
Have wak'd their Sleepers; op'd, and let them forth
By my so potent art.*

Tempest, Act. 5. Sc. 1.

If any Poet deserves mentioning after *Shakespear*, it is *Lucan*: not indeed for the strength of his description,

262 *The Heathen rejection of the*

of the Poetic world could fancy up to a system so exquisitely framed and contrived for wonders.

I had said before, in the end of the third Chapter, that if the low opinion of the Heathens in relation to Miracles did not then sufficiently appear, it would be most incontestably shewn as we went along; and there cannot be a fitter occasion for reminding the Reader of it than this: it is almost impossible for men under the influence of this opinion to be otherwise disposed; since they not only believed the need-

though that * is here very excellent, but for that grandeur and sublimity of sentiment remarkable in this great defender of liberty; thus, after mentioning the horrid rites and detestable arts of the *Thessalians*, famous for Magic, he adds in a strain peculiar to himself,

*Hos scelerum ritus, et diræ carmina gentis,
Effera damnârat nimis pietatis Eretho.*

Luc. Pharf. L. 6.

And afterwards in the same elevated manner;

*Omne nefas Superi primâ jam voce vocantis
Concedunt, carmenque timent audire secundum.*

Id. *ibid.*

* *Torpuît et præceps audito carmine mundus:
Axibus et rapidis impulsos Jupiter urgens
Miratur non ire polos, &c.*

Id. *ibid.*

Christian Miracles considered. 263

needless interposition of *Dæmons* in those numberless works of Superstition just now recited; but maintained likewise, that these *Dæmons* were as numerous as the *idle events*, which they engaged in; that there would be absolutely a *chasm* in nature without them; that as all the other elements were stocked with life, it would be unreasonable to think that the air was not; that this therefore was the proper habitation of *Dæmons*, and that of these it was full.

Whoever will peruse the tedious work of *Jamblichus* on this head will see all, that has been hitherto said, maintained at large; and on that account perhaps will more easily perceive how readily all supernatural operations might be admitted; but then at the same time that he leaves

* This *Plato* had very emphatically expressed in the words quoted before *ἐν πύσσωδ' ὄν* &c. but *Apuleius* is forced to go farther about, for fear, I suppose, of losing the smallest portion of so valuable a system.

Quid igitur tanta vis aëris quæ ab humillimis Lunæ anfractibus usque ad summum Olympi verticem interjacet? quid tandem? vacabitne animalibus suis? atque erit ista Naturæ pars mortua ac debilis? &c.

Cedo igitur mente formemus, &c. *Apul. de Dea Socratis.*

264 *The Heathen rejection of the*

leaves off wondering at the credulity of the Antients in one respect, he will begin to wonder at it in another; at the same time that he acknowledges that these principles are admirably fitted for the solution of Miracles; he will find a fresh difficulty in acknowledging the principles themselves."

The truth of it is, there is no appearance of reason through the whole performance, it is a system raised on no other foundation than what *meer fancy* had invented: and were it not that it is necessary sometimes to be informed of the opinions of the Antients, the perusal of such books must give us sensible displeasure;

one

* This is what *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, and the rest of that sect always did and always would have done; though * *Lactantius* is of opinion, that if they had seen the power of Magicians over human souls, they would not have any longer disputed their immortality: but here the good

Father

* *Falsa est ergo Democriti, & Epicuri, & Dicaearchi de animæ dissolutione sententia; qui profecto non auderent de interitu animarum, mago aliquo præfente, differere; qui sciret certis carminibus ciere ab inferis animas, & adesse, et præbere se humanis oculis videndas, & loqui, & futura prædicere: & si auderent, re ipsa & documentis præsentibus vincerentur. sed quia non pervidebant animæ rationem, quæ tam subtilis est ut oculos humanæ mentis effugiat, interire dixerunt.*

Lactant. Div. Inst. L. 7. sect. 13.

Christian Miracles considered. 265

one can scarce help being angry to see time so mispent, and reason so abused;—to see the great designs of Providence so scandalously trifled with, and profaned;—to see ceremonies instituted, prayers put up, and sacrifices offered to a race of creatures whose properties are unknown, and *whose very beings are disputed*; to see objections raised and solutions given on the same *chimerical* and unreasonable supposition; to see, in short, weak and imperfect creatures rashly portioning out the elements of the world, and filling them at random with *visionary inhabitants*, only to be subservient to their little concerns.*

But

Father measured the belief of others by his own; never considering that the Epicureans had in these cases put on the *adamantine* † *mind*, that they had *steel*ed themselves against all conviction of this nature, and what-ever they could not account for, resolved into imposture.

† Ὡς ἐπ' αὐτὸ τὸ μηχανήμα ἰδεῖτο Δημοκρίτου τινός, ἢ καὶ αὐτοῦ Ἐπικούρου, ἢ Μετροδώρου, ἢ τινός ἄλλου ἀδαμαντίνην πρὸς ταῦτα, καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τὴν γνώμην ἔχοντες, ὡς ἀπίσταναι, καὶ ὅπερ ἦν εἰκάσαι, καὶ εἰ μὴ εὐρεῖν τὸν τρόπον εἰδύνατο, ἐκεῖνο γὰρ προπεπεισμένον, ὅτι λελήθεν αὐτοὺς ἡ τροπή τῆς μαγείας.

Lucian. Pseudomant.

* Bekker, who intended by his celebrated work to drive the Devil out of the world, has employed part of it with more success to demolish his *Subalterns*; but the worst

266 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But after all, one would think that we need not have taken such pains to clear up this point to a Christian Reader, if he would only consider those systems of Magic that have frequently been in use amongst ourselves, and which may be seen at large in many of the Authors quoted in the margin: *Christians* have

worst of it is, that as the *Pagan* doctrine of *Dæmons* wanted no confutation at all, * so the Scripture one of the Devil wanted more than he could give it: so that he will be ever as illustrious an instance amongst the Moderns of rashly endeavouring to pull down what had been firmly established; as the *Dæmonologers* amongst the Antients of foolishly endeavouring to build without any foundation.

* What he has said in the following passage would of itself have been sufficient for this purpose, and will for ever remain in full force against the pretended necessity of their mediation.

Or bien apprehende t'on que ce lui seroit trop de peine d'avoir soin lui seul, & sans l'aide de Personne, de tout ce qui est nécessaire? il faut que ceux qui parlent de la sorte s'imaginent que Dieu soit entièrement fait comme eux. ps. 50. 21. si il n'a pas été las de créer, à plus forte raison le devient il encore moins de conserver, ou d'entretenir ce qu'il crée. Si creation de la nature étoit capable de lui causer quelque degout, ou quelque lassitude, pourquoi ne restoit il pas tout seul? quelle imperfection étoit ce dans la dernière perfection, celle qui obligeoit a une chose qui pouvoit apporter le moindre empechement a un bonheur absolu? Pauvres & aveugles payens! Ne savez vous pas que le Dieu d'éternité est l'éternel qui a créé les bornes de la terre, & qui ne se lasse ni se travaille point. Es. 40. 28.

flow

Bekker, le monde enchaîné. L. 12. c. 3.

Christian Miracles considered. 267

have much less reason from their religion to place any confidence in so detestable an art; and they are likewise from the precepts of it in some places, and the historical parts of it in others, severely forbidden; and yet what is more inconceivable than any thing hitherto advanced, we know to what degree it once prevailed in some of the most improved and politest places of the Christian world.

Del Rio disquisit. Magic. Wierus de Præstig. Dæmon. Trithemii Steganograph. Pictorii Epitome Magica. Thyraus de Superst. Peuceirus de Præcip. Divin. Generib. Cornel. Agrippa. Joh. Bodin. Cardan. Grosius, &c.

Levitic. 19. 31. Sam. 6. 28. Acts 19. 21.
In this last place we see that some who embraced Christianity rightly begun with the burning of their magical books, though the price of them was so great as to amount to fifty thousand pieces of silver. — What these magical books so much esteemed were, is not easy for us at this time to discover; but if, as 'tis probable from the nature of the thing, they were like some modern ones, there is no great reason to lament their loss.

Agrippa. de Occult. Phil. L. 4. Cardan. de Subtil. L. 18.
Bayle, pensées diverses sur une Comete, &c. v. I. Daniel, Histoire de France sous le regne de Francis II. Charles IX, Henry III, &c. Davila ibid. Del Rio Disquisit Magic. in prologia.

268 *The Heathen rejection of the*

° *Del Rio*, who in his time complained that it was spreading itself through all *Europe*, ought not to have forgot that it fixed its principal residence, its *imperial seat*, in *France*; where it reigned over the hearts of a succession of their Monarchs with an *absolute and uncontrollable sway*. — *Catherine de Medicis* omitted no part of it either natural or diabolical to obtain her ends; though indeed she sometimes seemed to place the greatest confidence in the former: at least the Magic of her ^d Ladies, which was of this sort, was often of greater consequence to her than the Magic of *Dæmons*, and operated more powerfully on the minds of those whom she found it necessary to subdue. — It does not however appear that by her want of faith she despised the empire of the *Devil*, or if she did, she brought forth a race of Princes who did not; so that the principles of the Children make ample amends for the *infidelity* of the Mother.

It

° Hoc opus ut facerem longe fortius impulit lues quam obscæna tam proserpens veneficorum & incantatorum, quæ hoc novissimo sæculo se per omnem in dies Europam longius ac latius diffundit. *Del Rio* ubi supra.

^d *Davila* ubi supra.

° Cum Trifculanus ille Cenomannus, præsentè Carolo IX. Galliarum rege, ex torque aureo alterius a se longe remoti

It would not be proper now to enumerate that variety of wonders imputed to Magic in that Country and at that time: and I beg leave to mention only one, for a purpose which the Protestant Reader will easily discover.

“ Charles the Ninth, being present at some
“ Magical operations, was so shocked at the
“ seemingly voluntary motion of the parts of
“ a chain from a man’s neck, while the chain
“ remained intire, that he ordered the Magi-
“ cian from his presence, and threatened to in-
“ flict a severe punishment upon him, unless
“ he discovered the partners of his iniquity.

Now it would not be easy to imagine, that there could be a person in his senses, who was not able to look upon a Conjuror playing his tricks *without horror*, and at the same time behold the massacre of several thousands of his fellow Creatures *with pleasure*: and yet this

cer-
remoti annellos pelliceret singulos & advolantes sua re-
ciperet manu, prout saltem videbatur, ad ejus rei con-
spectum sic rex exhorruit, ut hominem abire jussit; imo
pro grandi præmio quod expectabat, judicio sit traditus,
spe tamen veniæ, si conscios magiæ proderet. *Vossius de*
Idololat. L. 1. c. 9. Bodin Dæmonol. L. 3. Del Rio disq.
Mag. c. 4. Raguseus de Divinat. L. 2.

certainly was the case with the religious *Charles*: since we have already seen, that the operation just mentioned had something *too diabolical* in it to be supported by him; though according to an Historian of his own faith, who would not wrong him on this occasion, He not only assisted at the murder of the Protestants with his presence, his advice, and applause; but even shot at them himself, as they fled from his presence in an abject and unkingly manner.⁶

But such different forms of religion can Popery inspire! it can break a man's spirit to the fearful apprehensions of a Spectre or a Demon; and at the same time steel it against all the ties of humanity and suggestions of nature.

And now having brought the Reader through the *dark and horrid Land of Magic*, in which notwithstanding his journey has been shortened

⁶ On vit le matin la riviere toute couverte de corps morts. une infinité des gens fugoient au-de-la: & le roy oubliant ce qu' il estoit, tiroit sur eux luy mesme avec de longues arquebuses, qu' on luy chargeoit les unes apres les autres, & croyoit de toute sa force, tuez, tuez.

Daniel, Hist. vol. 3. p. 1730.

Brantome dans l' eloge de Charles IX.

What

Christian Miracles considered. 271

as much as possible, he will not be surprized to see the use which the Heathens made of it in regard to *Christ* and his religion.

Superstitio nova & malefica was the appellation given to it by *Suetonius* in his time; and it is an appellation exactly suitable to the principles of that system which we have just now produced.

Whoever would see what is said farther against our religion may consult the *Roman* Historians on this subject; where he will find it charged with such heavy accusations^s as are answerable to the detested origin which they had ascribed to it. I shall only observe farther on this point, that in process of time these odious appellations, which the Heathens had fixed on Christianity, became of the worst consequence

What immediately follows this relation is still, if possible, more unkingly: which is, that looking with his Courtiers on the dead Admiral, when some held their noses on account of the stench, He laughed and said, The odour of a dead enemy was always pleasant.

^s *Tacit. Annal. L. 15. c. 44. Sueton. in Claud. c. 25. Neron. c. 16. Ammian. Marcellin. L. 22. Senecc. apud. August.*

sequence to the Christian affairs; and that the greatest difficulties which the early professors of our religion had in their correspondence with the Gentiles to encounter, were principally owing to those obstinate prejudices, which long calumny and detraction had rivetted in their minds; insomuch that we find most of the Christian Apologists, and especially *Tertullian*^h and *Athenagoras*, lamenting on this occasion their *singular hard fortune*; that when other people were accused only of *Things*; the Christians were accused of a *Name*; and that which was in *other cases* in itself quite indifferent,

was in *other cases* in itself quite indifferent,

August. de Civ. Dei, L. 6. c. 11. Capitolin. in Pertinace.

If the word *Chrestologus*; in the last Author, relates to Christianity at all, as some suppose, the reason of it is exactly of a piece with all the other accusations of it: the words are, *Chrestologum eum Pertinacem appellantes, qui bene loqueretur, & male faceret.* Even *Pliny* himself, in a letter written purposely in defence of Christians, could not help calling their religion *Superstitio prava & immodica*; and for other opprobrious names bestowed upon them, even to that of Atheism itself, see the following Authors.

Sozom. Hist. L. 5. c. 4. Hieron. Ep. 10. ad Furiam. Cels. ap. Orig. L. 1. Just. Dial. cum Tryph. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. L. 6. c. 19. Athenag. Legat. pro Christian. Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 1. id. L. 6. Justin. Apol. 1. Lucian. Pseudomantis. Min. Fel. Octav.

Christian Miracles considered. 273

was *here* almost a capital crime; and when, amongst all other professions of men, it was reckoned of no weight in proceedings against them at the Bar, with the Christians it was of so much, as frequently to condemn them without any hearing at all.ⁱ

Neither was this done only in profligate and barbarous reigns, by those monsters of humanity, who were either too dissipated to regard, or too savage to commiserate the sufferings of their fellow creatures; but by those very persons, in whom, according to ^k *Plato's* wish, the Philosopher and the Emperour were united; who

^h *Tertull. Apol. id. ad Nation. Athenag. Legat. pro Christian.*

ⁱ Ἐφ' ἡμῶν δὲ μάλιστα ἰσχύει τὸ ὄνομα τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ δίκῃ ἐλέγχων. ἐκ ἐῖς ἡδίκησε τι ὃ κρινόμενος, τῶν δικαζόντων ἐπιζητούντων, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ ὄνομα ὡς εἰς ἀδίκημα ἐνυβριζόντων. *Athenag. ubi supra.*

Again, Ἐἰ δὲ μέχρις ὀνόματις ἡ κατηγορία, &c.

Id. ibid.

Again, Τί γὰρ ἡμῶν τὸ ὄνομα πρὸς κακίαν τείλει;

Id. ibid.

^k This *Athenagoras* intimates in his address on this occasion; which is this: "To the Emperours *Aurelius Antoninus*, and *L. Aurelius Commodus* of *Armenia* and *Sarmatia* Conquerours; and what is more, Philosophers,

274 *The Heathen rejection of the*

who took a pride in the glory and happiness of their subjects; and from the common blessings of whose auspicious reign only Christians, because they were * called *Christians*, were excluded.

But if the sect met with such abuse, we may be sure the Author of it would not escape free: we have seen before the fate which the *Jewish* Lawgiver met with from the Pagan world, and how readily he was ranked with the † *Dardanus's* and *Damigeron's* of Antiquity; and if the *Gentile* Religion had not yielded to the *Christian*, this likewise must have been the case with our holy Redeemer.

That it was so at least some time after his death, we are assured from indisputable authority; from the authority of those men, who would not willingly have had such an imputation fixed on the illustrious Author of their faith:

* Τὸ τοίνυν πρὸς πάντας ἴσον δι' ἡμῶν ἀξίωμα, μὴ εἶναι Χριστιανοὶ λεγόμεθα, μισεῖσθαι καὶ καταξέσθαι.

Athenag. ubi supra.

† *Apul. Apolog. Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 30. c. 1.*

‡ *Arnob. Discept. cont. Gent. L. 1. August. L. 1. De Consensu. Evang. c. 8, 9. Origen. cont. Cels. L. 1, 2. Julian apud Cyril. L. 6. Euseb. Demon. Evang. L. 3. c. 6.*

faith: and yet from these we are not only informed that he was commonly accused of Magic by the Heathens, but that he learnt it from *Egypt*, and communicated all the secrets of it to his Disciples.¹

The manner of his learning it from *Egypt* is indeed whimsical enough, and yet so generally admitted, that *Arnobius* informs us, that it was a common objection of the Heathens in his time, to say, that he had stolen the profoundest doctrines, and the names of the most powerful Angels from the inmost recesses of the *Egyptian* Temples.^m

As odd as this solution of the Christian Miracles may seem, it was not the *Gentiles* only that admitted it; many of the later ^a *Jews* have imputed them to the same imaginary causes; and in ^o two of the most virulent and blas-

■ Occursurus forsan rursus est cum aliis multis calumniis illis et puerilibus verbis; Magus fuit; Clandestinis artibus omnia perfecit: Ægyptiorum ex adytis angelorum potentium nomina et remotas furatus est disciplinas.

Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 1.

^a *Basnage. Histoire des Juifs. L. 4. c. 27, 28.*

^o *Taldos Jesu per Wagenfel. pag. 1015. Taldos Huldrici. passim.*

276 *The Heathen rejection of the*

blasphemous books, that have ever been written against the Christian cause it is expressly asserted, that our Saviour wrought all his Miracles by virtue of the ineffable^p name of *Jehovah* stolen out of the Temple.

This is no place to say any thing in confutation of this doctrine, else it might naturally be asked (as *Pliny*^a does of a certain herb which thrown into an Army would put it to flight,) Where was this herb when *Rome* was pressed with

^p Indeed many have had a great opinion of the use of names or words, especially barbarous ones in Magic, as well as Prayer; thinking them more significant in themselves, and more agreeable to the Gods; on which account αἱ πρῶται (says *Clemens Alexand.* Strom. 1) οἱ γυναικῶν διάλεκτοι βάρβαροι μὲν, φύσει δὲ τὰ ὀνόματα ἔχουσιν. Vid. etiam *Arnob. cont. Gent.* L. 1. *Euseb. Prasat.* L. 4. *Prap. Evang. Apuleius. Iamblichus. Tibullus,* L. 1. El. 2.

Jam ciet infernas magico stridore Catervas.

Tibull. ubi supra.

Ter novies carmen magico demurmurat ore.

Ovid. Met. L. 14.

Some Christians have been too superstitiously of the same opinion. See this at large in *Reuchlinus de verba mirifica.*

^a *Pliny* in this place mentions likewise another prodigious Herb. Achæmenide conjecta in aciem hostium, trepidare agmina, ac terga vertere. Latacen dari solitam a Persarum rege legatis, ut, quocunque venissent, omnium rerum

with the *Teutones* and *Cimbri*? why did not the *Aſtaticks* make uſe of it when *Lucullus* put them to rout? why likewise was this ineffable name kept ſo long uſeleſs in the Temple? why did it not prevent the deſolation of it by *Antiochus*, and lend its aſſiſtance ſo often in their greateſt diſtreſs?

But we are not yet come to an end of the *Heathen* accuſations of *Chriſt* as a Magician; ſince, if we believe one who had ſearched much into

rerum copia abundarent. — Ubinam iſtæ fuere cum *Cimbri* *Teutoneſque* terribili Marte ulularent? aut cum *Lucullus* tot reges *Magorum* paucis legionibus ſterneret? curvè *Romani* duces &c. *Plin. Nat. Hiſt.* L. 26. c. 4.

Naudé Apologie des Grands Hommes &c. cap. 2.

The title of ſome of theſe books were, *Magia Jeſu Chriſti ad Petrum et Paulum Apoſtoloſ* &c. Which account of them though *Saint Jerom*, whom *Naudé* quotes on this occaſion does not confirm, yet *Saint Auſtin* does in the following paſſage.

Ita vero iſti deſipiunt, ut in illis libris, quos eum (*Chriſtum*) ſcripſiſſe exiſtimant, dicant contineri eas artes, quibus eum putant illa feciſſe miracula, quorum fama ubique percrebuit.

Quid quod divino iudicio ſic errant quidam eorum, qui talia *Chriſtum* ſcripſiſſe vel credunt, vel credi volunt, ut eoſdem libros ad *Petrum* et *Paulum* tanquam *Epistoſolari* titulo prænotatos?

Auguſt. L. 1. De Conſenſu Evangeliſt. c. 8, 9.

278 *The Heathen rejection of the*

into this matter, they published several books under his name, which St. *Jerom* and St. *Austin* had taken some pains to prove spurious ; nay so commonly were He and the Professours of his Religion accused of this practice, that in some succeeding Miracles, when part of the world imputed them to Magicians, part to Christians, a learned man amongst the Moderns would perswade us that the terms were synonymous ; and that on this occasion in the Heathen Language a Magician and a Christian were the same.

But

▪ This relates to the miraculous safety of the *Romans* under *Antoninus* in *Germany*, at war with the *Quadi* and *Marcomani*, by means of a sudden Rain, which the Christian Writers imputed to the prayers of the Christians, the Heathen Writers to Magic, or the prayers of the Emperour.

On the former head, see *Euseb. Hist.* L. 4. c. 26, 27. L. 5. c. 5. *Tertull. ad Scapul.* c. 4. *Apolog.* c. 5. *Euseb. Chron.*

On the latter, *Jul. Capitolin. Marc. Aurel.* c. 24. *Dion. ap. Xiphil. in Marc. Aurel. Themist. Orat. ad Theodor. Claud. in 6. Consul. Honor. Lamprid. in Heliogab.*

▪ Quos enim Magos (hi) appellant, ipsi videntur esse Christiani : nam Ethnici, rerum ad Christianos pertinentium imperiti, Christianos a Judæis neutiquam distinguebant : Judæi autem Chaldæorum suorum Progenitorum Nominē noscebantur.

Huet. Demonstr. Evangel. Prop. 3.

This

But this must probably be reckoned amongst the other *reveries* of this fanciful Writer for the reason mentioned in the margin, and not for want of any malice in the *Heathens* to establish such an opinion; for that no charge of this nature, how black or malignant soever, might be wanting, we find that even the prodigies of the "Crucifixion were resolved into Magic: *Celsus* indeed, who does it, is supposed in *Origen* to personate a Jew, but how unsuccessfully, as that Author sometimes hints, so at present is very plain; as he supposes the

Mi-

This conjecture seems to be made for no other reason than for the sake of making it; since, in the first place few or none of the Heathens imputed this Miracle to the Christians; in the second place, if they did, nothing is more probable than that they should impute this likewise to Magic, as they had done so before with all others of Christianity.

* Οἶδε ὑμῖν δὲ τὴν καταστροφὴν τοῦ δράματος, ἐν-
χημόνως ἢ πιδανῶς ἐφευρῆσθαι τὴν ἐπὶ τῷ σκόλοπι αὐτοῦ
φωνὴν δὲ ἀπέπει, καὶ τὸν σεισμόν, καὶ τὸν σκότον &c.
τίς τῶτο οἶδε; γυνὴ πᾶροις-ρος, ὡς φατὶ, καὶ ἑτερος
τῶν ἐκ τῆς αὐτῆς γοντείας.

The *Γοντεία* here must mean natural Magic, as opposed to that which we have been so long considering; and not operating in so wonderful a manner. *Origen* by his answer understands it so too, and endeavours to prove that the prodigies objected to were real.

280 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Miracles were not true ; since in this case he must be inconsistent with the antient * *Jews*, who imputed them to *Beelzebub* ; he must be inconsistent with the Modern, who imputed them to the name of God ; † he must be inconsistent with his Countrymen, who imputed them to *Egyptian* discipline ; ‡ he must be inconsistent with himself, who imputed them to the same, §

Inconsistency itself can go no higher than this, and therefore here let it rest ; unhurtful to the Christian cause, and absolutely destructive of the Heathen malice : from whence, at least, we may draw this favourable conclusion for the pains which we have been at in dragging it to light, namely, that amidst all the blindness of understanding and corruption of heart ;
amidst

* *Luke* II. 15.

† *Basnage, Histoire de Juifs.* c. 27, 28.

‡ *Arnob. cont. Gent.* L. I.

§ Συγκαταλιθέμενος μὲν πῶς ταῖς παραδόξαις δυνάμεσιν ὡς Ἰησοῦς ἐποίησεν, ἐν αἷς τῆς πολλῆς ἐπεισεν ἀκολουθεῖν αὐτῷ ὡς Χριστῷ, διαβάλλειν δ' αὐτὰς βυλόμενος ὡς ἀπὸ μαγείας, καὶ ἡ θεία δυνάμει γεγενημένας. Φησὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν σκότιον τράφεντα, μισθαρνίσαντα εἰς Αἴγυπτον δυνάμεων τινῶν πειραθέντα, ἐκεῖθεν ἐπανελθεῖν &c.

Origen cont. Cels. L. I.

Christian Miracles considered. 281

amidst all the prejudices of education, and stubbornness of habit; amidst all the powers of interest, and allurements of ambition, none have ever dared to deny the Miracles of Christ; and that even the bitterest and most virulent objector could not dispute their reality, without at once contradicting the testimony of the world, and the testimony of himself.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

*Of the influence which the Multiplicity
of Gods must have over the Conduct
of the Heathens.*

I take it for granted that the intelligent Reader can have no objection to the force of the principle considered in the last Chapter, except that it should not appear to him sufficiently extensive; that the doctrine of Dæmons is indeed too plain to be denied, but then perhaps this doctrine was not admitted by so many, as to influence the bulk of the Heathens in the degree we have supposed.

But

Ἔτι Δημόκριτος εὐχόμενος εὐλόγων εἰδώλων τυγχάνειν, ἢ ὅλος ἦν ἕτερα δυσίραπελα, καὶ μοχθηρὰς γνώσεων ἔχουσα προαιρέσεις τινὰς καὶ ὀρμὰς.

Which *Plutarch* thinks tantamount to the doctrine of Dæmons.

Plut. de defect. Orac. Diogen. Laert. L. 8. Gassend. Syntag. Philos. Epicur. l. 2. Schrammii Prin. Th. Revel. c. 6.

Christian Miracles considered. 283

But neither indeed could the Reader have a much greater scruple about the extent of this doctrine than the truth of it, if he would duly consider what has been said; and that not only Philosophers of the most opposite principles believed it, and amongst these *Democritus* himself, * the most averse to it by his profession of any sect whatsoever; but that it must likewise necessarily have spread over the hearts of mankind in general; since magic itself was so widely propagated, and the wonderful events ascribed to it could not possibly be solved but upon some such supposition. Nay, if we believe *Eusebius* ^b in this matter, (who on account of his consummate ^c knowledge in Antiquity deserves most of all to be believed,) the account of

* Πάλιν ἐρωτηθέν ἐπολε ὀφθαλμοῖς εἶδεν, ἢ ἀκοῇ ἔγνω γόητας τε καὶ φαρμακίας δίχα σπονδῶν καὶ θυμάτων, καὶ δαιμόνων ἐπικλησίῳ τε καὶ παρουσίας γοητευούσας.

Euseb. Demonst. Evang. L. 3. c. 6.

* Both friends and enemies have agreed to celebrate *Eusebius* on this account. *St. Jerom*, who was in the number of the last, says, Vir doctissimus Eusebius, Doctissimum dico non Catholicum. *Antipater of Bostria* calls him, Πολυτίμω; and *St. Basil* says farther, that he was Δια πολυτιμίαν ἀξιώσιμος.

Dupin. Hist. Eccles. v. 2.

284 *The Heathen rejection of the*

of Dæmons was so visibly connected with Magic, that nothing in that art could be done without them; insomuch that in his answer to those who looked upon Christ as a Magician, he asks them, How they can prove that Christ ever implored the assistance of Dæmons in the performance of his Miracles, when it was always required in every magical operation?

But there is no manner of occasion to insist on this, because the Gods of the Heathens themselves, exclusive of these Dæmons, had so great a share in the affairs of the world, that this is another inexhausted source of the miracles of the Heathens: for though *Plato* asserts of God, ^d that he meddles not with human transactions only by means of these intermediate

^d Πάν τὸ δαιμονιὸν μετὰ τὸ εἶναι θεῶν καὶ θνητῶν.—θεὸς δ' αὐτοῖσι μίγνυται, ἀλλὰ διὰ τούτου πάντα εἶναι ἢ ὁμιλεῖν.

Plat. in *Symposio*.

^e *Herbert. de Relig. Gent. c. 14. Wier. de Præstig. Dæm. L. 1. c. 5.*

^f Vos quoque plebs Superum, Fauni, Satyrique Lareſque, Flumina, & Nymphæ, Semi-deûmque Genus.

Ovid. in Ibin.

^g *Vossius de Idololat. L. 3. c. 1, 2, 3, 4, &c.*

Christian Miracles considered. 285

mediate beings, yet this in his philosophy is only to be supposed of the one great God; in civil life it was otherwise, and if Dæmons were not always introduced on extraordinary occasions, the Gods were ready to supply their place, and that likewise in such prodigious numbers, as separately to preside over all the actions of life, and all the powers of nature.

Hence not only *Jove* with his Council of Deities, who from consulting with him on the affairs of the universe are called *Consentes* by the Antients; but Tutelary Gods, Household Gods, Genial Gods, and Country Gods; ^f Fauns, Sylvans, Satyrs, Lemures; Nymphs, Naiades, Sirenes, Nereides; ^g Winds, Tempests, Animals, Vegetables; ^h Impudence, Calumny, Fear,

^h These last indeed are rejected by the learned *Roman*, when he is fixing with great accuracy such regulations in civil life and religion as might credit and adorn the State to which they belonged; though indeed considering the states which admitted them, and his own reasoning on the subject, he ought not to have been so squeamish:

Bene vero quod mens, pietas, virtus, fides consecratur manu: quarum omnium Romæ dedicata publicè templa sunt, ut illa qui habeant, (habent autem omnes boni) Deos ipsos in animo suo collocatos putent. Nam illud vitiosum

286 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Fear, Disease : in short such a number of Gods as made *Atlas* himself, (as *Juvenal* expresses it,) almost sink under his burden ; and made a modern^k cry out with zealous indignation, that almost every thing was God but God himself.

And that this is no aggravation of the matter, appears from the authority of the learned *Roman* so often quoted ; who assures us, that in his time the number of the Gods was thirty thousand ; and that this likewise was a very modest account we learn farther from *Pindar*, who long

tiosum Athenis, quod Cylonio scelere expiato, Epimenide Crete suadente fecerunt contumeliæ sanum & impudentiæ : virtutes enim, non vitia consecrare decet. Atque vetus stat in palatio Febris, & altera Exquiliis malæ Fortunæ detestatæque. quæ omnia repudianda sunt.

Cicer. de Legibus, L. 2.

Soon after he says, Jam illud ex institutis Pontificum & Aruspicum non mutandum est, quibus hostiis immolandum cuique Deo, cui majoribus, cui lactentibus, cui maribus, cui foeminis. As if there was any greater reason for the choice of a male or female victim to *one* imaginary Being, than consecrating a temple to *another* ; or if the first was to be complied with on account of the magistrates command, why should he have been so scrupulous in regard to the latter ? See on this head *August. de Civ.*

Christian Miracles considered. 287

long before had brought in the same number: and that the towering genius of *Pindar* did not on this occasion make him write inaccurately on his subject, is plain, lastly, from the testimony of *Hesiod*, who agrees exactly with them both.

So that in this case we have the simplicity of *Hesiod*, the sublimity of *Pindar*, and the learning of *Varro*, all uniformly subscribing to the truth of a thing, which otherwise would be hard to be believed; but which we now know to be so true, that when the Gods were increasing from *Hesiod*'s time to *Varro*'s, this last

Civ. Dei, L. 4. c. 15. *Min. Fel. Cyprian de Idolor. Vanit.*
Clem. Alexand. Admon. ad Gent. Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 2. c. 7.

— nec turba Deorum

Talis est ut hodie, contentaque fidera paucis

Numinibus, miserum urgebant Atlanta minori

Pondere. — *Juv. sat.* 13.

* *Bossuet, discours sur l' Histoire Universelle.*

† *Varro*, who likewise says, that there were three hundred *Jupiters*. *Tertull. Apolog. August. de Civ. Dei.* L. 3. c. 12. id. L. 21. c. 23. L. 7. c. 12. *de Cicil. Deif.* 4, 5, 6.

‡ *Pind. ap. Max. Tyr. dissert.* 1. *Hesiod. Oper. & Deir.* L. 1.

Τρεῖς γὰρ μύριοι εἰσιν ἐπὶ χθονὶ πελυγοτάϊον

Ἀθάνατος Ζηνὸς, φύλακες μερόπων ἀνθρώπων.

last must have of consequence thrown in a considerable number of them into the general account.

And now who does not see the consequence of this system in regard to the point in question? for what room could there be for any veneration of Miracles produced by every Deity in his respective Province? Nay rather, how could any thing be reckoned at all a miracle, which was pretended to be so commonly wrought? — What supernatural knowledge of futurity could ever be sufficient to convince their reason, when a *Jupiter* or *Apollo* were so ready to inspire¹? What immediate cure of the most inveterate diseases could sufficiently raise their admiration, when the power of an *Æsculapius* was so frequently exerted^m? and what sudden and unlooked-for convulsion of nature could effectually rouse and alarm their minds, when they could so easily believe that a "*Juno*

¹ *Diodor. Sic. L. 16. Plutarch de Defect, Orac. Strab. L. 17.*

^m *Origen. cont. Cels. L. 3. Philost. Vit. Ap. L. 1, c. 7. Le Clerc. Hist. de Medicine.*

^a *Virg. Æn. L. 1.*

and an *Æolus* could raise such conflicts in the elements; when a *Jupiter* could launch his forked darts, and a ° *Neptune* could shake the stedfast Earth from its very foundation? Nay, what is worse than all this, when the interposition of the Gods at last became so frequent, that not only miracles were imputed to them where nothing miraculous appeared; but when they were likewise introduced on the *lowest* and *most infamous* occasions; when a *Divinity* must shelter the *Heroine's* weakness that yielded to the importunity of her Lover, and it must be a *God* that triumphed over the infirmities of the *Woman*.

Neither can it be alledged with any tolerable propriety, that such impostures belonged rather to the Poets, than that they were admitted in civil life; when we consider what has been before advanced of the Priest of *Saturn*, and that shameful adventure of *Mundus* and *Paulina*,

• *Hom. Iliad. passim.* The following image of him is given as an instance of the Sublime by *Longinus*, sect. 9.

Τρέμε δ' ἔρεα μακρὰ, καὶ ὕλη,
καὶ κορυφαί, Τρώων τε πόλεις, καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν
Ποσσὶν ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισιν Ποσειδάων ἰόντι.

T

which

290 *The Heathen rejection of the*

which the *Jewish* Historian has thought proper to record.

Fontenelle has made this Story so famous that little need be said of it; but as something must, I shall be as short in it as I can.

“ *Decius Mundus*, a Roman Knight, was in
 “ Love with a Roman Lady of the first rank
 “ both for dignity and virtue; and not being
 “ able to corrupt her with money, bribed by
 “ means of *Ide*, the Priests of *Isis*, to inform
 “ her that the God *Anubis* had an ardent af-
 “ fection for her, and desired her company in
 “ the Temple; to which both the chaste Lady
 “ and her Husband very gladly consented, as
 “ thinking it an extraordinary honour done to
 “ them both; and *Mundus* being hid in the
 “ Temple obtained all that he desired: *Paulina*
 af-

• *Joseph. Antiquit. Judaic. L. 18.*

I have selected two or three of the most important passages of the Historian in order to convince any one who doubts about this matter.

Περικλὲς ἔλεγεν (ὁ ἱερεὺς) ἦκεν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀνέκιδος,
 ἔρωτι αὐτῆς ἡσθημένῳ τῷ θεῷ Ἰσίδι. Τῇ δὲ αὐτῇ οὗτος ὁ λόγος ἦν Ἰσίδι.
 Καὶ φράζει πρὸς τὸν ἄνδρα διῆπτον τε αὐτῇ καὶ ἰσὺν τῷ
 Ἀνέ-

Christian Miracles considered. 291

“ afterwards boasted of the favour to her
“ Husband and her Friends ; but *Mundus* not
“ being able to keep the secret, it was com-
“ plained of at last to *Tiberius*, who ordered
“ the Temple of *Isis* to be demolished, and the
“ Priests to be crucified.”

On this occasion we might reply to the
objection of *Quintus* in a manner very different
from that which *Cicero* has made use of ; or
rather we might admit his objection, in respect
to the civil Religion without the inference he
would deduce from it in respect to the Philo-
sophical : — “ What therefore, says *Quintus*,
“ (after having shewed, as he thought, in
“ various instances the intercourse of the Gods
“ with men) do we expect? till they are
“ present with us in the Forum, in the Streets,
“ in our houses? &c.”

Indeed

Ἀνθρώποις ἐιστηγείλθαι· συνεχώρει δ' αὖτις τὴν σωφροσύνην
τῆς γυναικὸς ἐξεπιστάμενος· Χωρεῖ ὅνδε.

“ Quid igitur expectamus? an dum foro nobiscum Dii
immortales, dum in vicis versentur, dum domi? Qui
quidem ipsi se nobis non offerunt, vim autem suam longe
lateque diffundunt: quam cum terræ cavernis includunt,
tum hominum naturis implicant. *Cic. de Divin. L. i.*

292 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Indeed something like this, we see in the present case, might easily be done without any *considerable improvement* to the party favoured with their correspondence ; or at least, if their conversation with *Men* was of the same nature with that which is here supposed of the *Women* ; it would not much advance that knowledge of Futurity, which *Quintus* so earnestly contended for.

When once such things as these could be supposed of their Deities, it is no wonder to see what happened at *Lystra* to *Barnabas* and *Paul* ; * who on curing a lame man before the People were adored by them as *Jupiter* and *Mercury* : but this was owing to the low opinion of the Gods, not the high opinion of the

* The gravest of my Readers will, I imagine, be apt to smile on this occasion, and agree with me about the usefulness of the advice which the young *Lady* in *Ovid* receives from a Veteran in the Art of Love ; and that the excuse which she was to make for absenting herself from her Lover, by reason of her attendance on *Isis*, had something more substantial in it, than that of the head-ach.

Sæpe nega noctes : Capitis modo fingo dolorem :

Et modo quæ causas præbeat, Isis erit.

Ovid. Amor. L. 1. Eleg 8.

* *Acts* 14.

Christian Miracles considered. 293

the Miracle; as appears both from the practice of Antiquity, and this relation itself.

It was *Paul* that cured the lame man, and, by the testimony of the People, was the chief Speaker too; and yet he is only supposed to be *Mercury*, while *Barnabas* his assistant was called *Jupiter*; so that one was complimented with a *priority* of Godhead for perhaps only a greater gravity of temper, or more august appearance; while the other was *debased* into the Messenger of Heaven for *superiour* degrees of eloquence and power.

The behaviour of the Priest of *Jupiter*, who is mentioned on this occasion as a promoter of the intentions to sacrifice unto the Apostles, will make no manner of difference in the interpretation which we have brought; since the Gods of the People were the Gods of the Priests, and the more they sacrificed unto, the better.

But

▪ This is Saint *Chrysostom*'s reason; for *Barnabas*, he says, was, Ἀπὸ τῆς ὀψίως ἀξιογενεῖς.

Chrysost. Hom. 30. in Act. Ap.

▪ Quum Dei summi attributa supra allata inter Gentiles recepta essent; callidum (puto) irrepsit sacerdotum

294 *The Heathen rejection of the*

But the catastrophe of this adventure puts the whole matter past doubt, since those very people who could scarce be restrained from sacrificing to the Apostles as Gods, did quickly treat them as the worst of men; and by the instigation of some *Jews* stoned, as they imagined, that very person to death, who had raised their admiration and gratitude so high.

But thus the foolish Heathens behaved to their Deities, which rose and fell in the esteem of their Votaries, just as certain exigencies and occasions required; so that when sometimes, (as in the present case) an immortal God was to be persecuted to death, at others a person who really deserved that treatment was raised to the dignity of an immortal God.

I should think the Reader need not be informed of those many *shameful* instances of the truth of this point, especially when he has seen before the extraordinary fate of *Apollonius*; who

genus, qui haud satis habentes unum tantum in hac rerum universitate constitui Deum, e re sua esse putaverant ut alios huic summo Numini adjungerent Deos. Plus posse utilitatis stipendiique, &c. *Herbert. de Rel. Gent. c. 14.*

• *Acts 14. 19, &c.*

who, not only during his life, but also long after his death did so frequently take his place amongst Gods of men.*

However I shall just mention some instances, because this passage in the *Acts* may be thought by some to be of great consequence on the present occasion, as being in appearance contrary to that opinion of Miracles which we suppose the Heathens to have had.

We have seen before in the History of *Apollonius*, that though he did not concern himself about the wonderful operations of the *Brachmans*; yet on account of their doctrines he held them in great esteem, and looked upon them as Gods; and in the life of *Procræsus* we have an instance exactly parallel with the present, who, on account of his great memory in

* *Philostat. vit. Apoll. L. 8. c. 7. Eunap. de vit. Philos. in proem. Vopisc. in vit. Aurel.*

† Καὶ τὰ εἶνα τῷ σοφίᾳ περιλχνησάμενοι καθάπερ ἀγάλματος ἰδεῖν πάντες οἱ παρόντες, οἱ μὲν πόδας, οἱ μὲν δὲ καὶ χεῖρας προσκύνον· οἱ δὲ θεὸν ἔφασαν· οἱ δὲ Ἑρμῆος λόγιον τύπον. — There is just the same compliment paid him a few pages after on much the same account.

Eunap. de vit. Philos. in Procræsus.

296 *The Heathen rejection of the*

in an Oration which powerfully affected his Audience, was so highly and generally extolled; that some kissed his hands and feet, others affirmed that he was the type and resemblance of *Mercury*, and others that he was a *very God*.

There is another passage in the same Author which is carried to such an height that we can scarce look on it without *horror*; it is in the life of *Ædæsus*, where, speaking of the many predictions of *Sosipatra*, he says, that all were in general persuaded that she was in all places at once, which the Philosophers affirm of God: and in the very next sentence we have an account of her ^a Death.

If the Historians ^a and Poets could go no higher in their exaggerations of the fall of their mightiest Heroes, than to reflect on the *small*
portion

^a The original says *Gods*; but this is neither true of them, nor agreeable to the doctrine of *Plato*. But however Θεῶν be translated, it makes no difference in the present case.

Ταῦτα ἔλεγε καὶ εἶχεν ἄνους, καὶ πάντες ᾔδεισαν ὅτι πανταχῶ ἐῖν Σωσιπάτρα, καὶ πᾶσι πάρεσι τοῖς γενομένοις. ὥσπερ οἱ Φιλόσοφοι περὶ τῶν Θεῶν λέγουσι καὶ ἐτελεύτα δι' ἐπὶ τοῖς τρισὶ καισὶ. Eunap. de vit. Philos. in Ædæso.

portion of ground that now held the remains of those once so powerful Men,^b what words can be sufficient to express the extinction of the omnipresent *Sosipatra*? and what need will there be after such an illustrious instance to aggravate farther the folly of the *Heathens* in the many scandalous instances of deified men?

But *Sosipatra*, it may be said, was a Prophetess, and *Eunapius* a Rhetorician; the one had some claim to supernatural knowledge, and the other encreased it an hundred-fold. Well then; what was *Demetrius*, and what was *Athens*? the one a loose and profligate Warrior, the the other a wise and polished State: yet the State decreed, and the Warrior^c accepted the mar-

^b *Velleius Paterc. Luc. Juvenal.*

Unus Pellaë Juveni non sufficit orbis,
Æstuat infelix angusto limite mundi;
Ut Gyaris clausus scopulis, parvæque Seripho.
Cum tamen a figulis munitam intraverit urbem,
Sarcophago contentus erit. —

Again, *Expende Annibalem, quot libras in duce summo
Invenies? Hic est quem non capit Africa Mauro
Pêrfusa Oceano, Niloque admota tepenti.*

Juven. Sat. 10.

• But with a better grace than the *Athenians* bestowed them, as it was with some reluctance. *Athenæus* L. 6.

298 *The Heathen rejection of the*

marriage with ⁴ *Minerva*, the Temple, and the Altar. — But *Demetrius* had merit, and the *Athenians* had gratitude. Who can deny that? But of what use is this in the present case? And what has the merit of a *Man* to do with the

* *Clemens* of *Alexandria* has observed very well on this occasion, that *Demetrius* not finding any great use in this Marriage with *Minerva*, as her Statue was only present, very wisely contrived that his Mistress *Lamia* should supply her place.

Βωμοὶ δὲ πανταχῶ καὶ γάμος ὑπὸ Ἀθηναίων αὐτῷ ὁ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς εὐτροπίζετο. Οἱ δὲ τὸν μὲν Θεὸν καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀναγορεύοντες. Ὁ δὲ τὴν Θεὸν ὑπερφάνει, τὸ ἄγαλμα γῆμαι μὴ δυνάμενος. Λάμειαν δὲ τὴν ἑταίρην εἰς Ἀκρόπολιν ἀνίει &c. Clem. Admon. ad Gent. Democh. ap. Athenæum, L. 6.

Demochares in *Athenæus* has not mentioned the marriage with *Minerva*; but in some other respects his account is more extraordinary than that of *Clemens*, particularly in that the *Athenians* assured *Demetrius* that he was the one true God; and that the rest were either asleep, or else quite neglected their affairs.

* Flatterers of *Demetrius* to whom the grateful *Athenians*, decreed divine honours in common with their Master. Βωμοὶ (says the Historian) καὶ ἡρώα, καὶ σπονδαὶ τέτων ἐκάστω καὶ παῖδες ἤδοντο: Neither was *Lamia* omitted, as we might reasonably expect from what has been said, she being a fit Goddess for the new God, and quite necessary on this occasion. *Athenæus* ubi supra.

* A famous Champion at the Olympic Games, so successful that he never was conquered but once; on which

Christian Miracles considered. 299

the dignity of a God? yet suppose it has, what was *Burrbichus*, and what was * *Oxythemis*? what was † *Euthymus*, and what was *Hæphestion*? what was † *Antinous* and what was † *Claudius*? what

which account he was consecrated whilst he was living, by the command of the Oracle, and consent of *Jupiter* himself.

Consecratus est vivens sentiensque Oraculi ejusdem jussu, et Jovis Deorum summi adstipulatu Euthymus Pycta, semper Olympiæ victor, et semel victus.

Plin. Nat. Hist. L. 7. c. 47.

* A companion of *Alexander's*; and deified by him after * death; which indeed has some sort of excuse, as *Alexander* was a God himself; and was very near being a great one, if *Demades* had obtained his end, who moved † in the assembly of *Athens*, that he might be the thirteenth God, that is, next to the *Consentes*. However, though *Alexander* was not so fortunate as to accomplish this, he has at least escaped here the sarcasm which *Agésilas* sent to the *Thasii* on a like occasion; who, on their making him a God, desired them, if they had it in their power, first to deify themselves, and then him. †

† A Catamite of *Adrian's*, famous after death for his Temple and Oracles. *Spartian. vit. Adrian. Tertull. in Marc. L. 1. Van-Dale de Orac. Fontenella, Hist. des Orac.*

† This and the other *Roman* Gods hinted at here have given the world too much reason to be acquainted with

* *Quint. Curt. L. 10. Plutarch. in Alexand. Arrian. de Exped. Alexand. L. 7.*

† *Ælian. var. Hist. L. 5. c. 12.*

† *Alexand. ab Alexand. Gen. Diet. L. 6.*

what was *Caligula*, and what was *Nero*? In short, what were Wrestlers, and Pimps and Pathics? what a race of Tyrants and Monsters given up and abandoned to every crime?

This was not indeed the practice of remote Antiquity, and *soberer* Ages were more reserved in the distribution of celestial honours; that Country in particular which was the common Parent of the *Heathen* Theology was wont only at first to admit their Kings and Benefactors to the Skies: and in speaking of the *Ethiopians*, who bordered upon *Egypt*, *Strabo* assures us, that they only joined Kings with private Benefactors, because they were the common Fathers and

with them; See *Sueton. de vit. Caf. Tacit. Ann. L. 1. Id. L. 14. Senec. de Tranq. Anim. c. 14. Herod. L. 4. Capitolin. vit. Pertin. Dio. L. 59.*

And now after this let the Reader judge if the following passage in *Arnobius* be aggravated.

Illud vero quod sequitur quale est; quod Deos vobis inducitis alios Fabros, alios Medicos, alios Lanarios, Nautas, Citharistas, Aulædos, Venatores, Pastores, et quod superat, Rusticos? et ille, inquit, Deus est Musicus; et hic alter Divinus est; cæteri enim Dii non sunt &c. Obstetricis ille informatus artibus; medicorum alius institutus Disciplinis; ergone singuli suâ in re pollent, nec in auxilium vocati alienis possint in artibus subyenire?

Hic

and protectors of their people.^k — If therefore this custom had prevailed still with the *Lycaonians*, if it had been conveyed down to them from the first Ages sincere and uncorrupted, and had been made use of on this occasion in its *primitive and original* simplicity; yet even in this case the deification of the *Apostles* ought not to be reckoned any extraordinary thing.

But we are not yet come to an end of this remarkable passage, since it may still be objected from the behaviour of the *Apostles*, that they themselves were of opinion that the *Lycaonians* adored them to an extravagant degree, and intended to pay them such extraordinary

ho-
Hic in oratione facundus &c. Bardi enim sunt alii, nec possunt aliquid dictum (si oratio facienda est) eloqui.

Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 3.

^k Ὡς δὲ πικρὸν τὰς ἐνεργέτας, καὶ βασιλεῖς θεοὺς νομίζουσι. καὶ τῶν τῶν βασιλείας κοινὰς ἀπάντων μὲν Σωτῆρας καὶ φύλακας, τὰς δὲ ιδιώτας ἰδίως τοῖς εὖ παθεῖν ὑπ' αὐτῶν. *Strab. L. 17.*

Thus likewise *Cicero*: Divos, et Ollos qui cælestes semper habiti, colunt: et ollos, quos endo cælo merita locaverunt, Herculem, Liberum, Æsculapium, Castorem, Pollucem, Quirinum. *Cicer. de Legib. L. 2.*

Suscipit autem vita hominum, et consuetudo communis ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cælum fama ac voluntate tollerent. *Id. de Nat. Deor. L. 2.*

honours as were fit for no other than the Supreme Being to receive.

How trifling these honours were, has been already most clearly shewn; and we cannot suppose that two inspired *Apostles* should be deceived about the nature of them; or if they were not inspired on this occasion, yet as the diffusive knowledge and learning of St. Paul would not suffer him to be ignorant of the practice of the *Gentiles*, and the real intentions of the *Lycaonians* conformable to that practice, we must of necessity conclude, that they acted on this occasion agreeably to the high and important office they bore; that they took this opportunity of insinuating into their *ravished* Audience that they were deceived in their opinion both of the Gods and them; ^k that neither *Jupiter* nor *Mercury*, who were so frequently influenced by human passions, did really exist; ^l that there was only one great and Almighty Being, who was free from every weakness and imperfection of our nature, and that to him their adoration did most right-fully belong.

There

^k *Acts* i. 14. c. 14. 15, &c.

^l *Ibid.*

There being nothing therefore in this passage that is contrary to the low opinion of Miracles, which, from the multiplicity of Gods, the Heathens must have entertained; it may yet be objected to this multiplicity itself, that, though indeed it was admitted, yet it was admitted only amongst the Vulgar; that it was too gross to be received by the *refined spirits* of Antiquity; that they indeed had better notions of the nature of their Deities, however they disagreed in these notions themselves; or rather that they laid down the *fierceness* of opposition on this important occasion, and acknowledged with uniform and general consent one Sovereign God.^m

That the Heathen Philosophers in general believed not the system of Polytheism we have been considering, there is no reason to doubt; but what particular notions of the true God they had substituted in its room, is not yet become clear from all the enquiry that has been made; but if their numerous opinions on this head be collected faithfully by the *Epicurean* in

^m *Ramsay, Discours sur la Mythologie. Cudworth's Intellectual Syst. c. 4. l. 26. Herbert. de Relig. Gent. c. 14. Haseus de Gentilium Philosophis Atheismi falso suspectis.*

in *Cicero*, which ^a*Cotta* assures us was the case, many of these at least will have very little reason to boast of their great proficiency above the vulgar.

Varro informs us, that the Pagan Religion was divided into three sorts, the Fabulous, the Philosophical, and the Civil: the first of which belonged to the Poets, the second was for private

• Etenim enumerasti memoriter & copiose (ut mihi quidem admirari liberet in homine Romano esse tantam scientiam) usque a Thale Milefio Philosophorum sententias. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. L. 1.*

• Tria sunt genera Theologiæ, eorumque unum Mythicon appellatur, alterum Physicon, tertium Civile. Mythicon appellant quo maxime utuntur Poetæ, Physicon quo Philosophi, civile quo Populi. Primum quod dixi, in eo sunt multa contra dignitatem & naturam immortalium ficta: in hoc enim est ut Deus alius ex capite, alius ex femore sit, alius ex guttis sanguinis natus: in hoc ut Dii furati sint, ut adulteraverint, ut servierint homini; denique in hoc omnia Diis attribuuntur, quæ non modo in hominem, sed etiam in contemptissimum hominem cadere possunt. Secundum genus est quod demonstravi, de quo multos libros Philosophi reliquerunt; in quibus est, Dii qui sint, ubi sint, quod genus, quale, ex quonam tempore, an sempiterno fuerint, an ex igne sint, ut credidit *Heracitus*, an ex numeris, ut *Pythagoras*, an ex atomis, ut *Epicurus*. sic alia quæ facilius intra parietes, in scholâ, quam

vate disputes, and the third for public use ; and by the marks and characteresticks which he has given us of them all, there is not so great a disparity as some might reasonably expect.

Accordingly we find that St. *Austin* thinks that there was but little difference between the Fabulous Religion, and the Civil : and this will not be charged upon him as the fallies and aggravations of Christian zeal, when we find a Hea-

quam extra in foro ferre possunt aures. tertium genus quod urbibus cives, maximè sacerdotes nosse atque administrare debent ; in quo est, quos deos publice colere, quæ sacra & sacrificia facere quemquam par sit. Prima Theologia maxime accommodata est ad theatrum, secunda ad mundum, tertia ad urbem.

Varro apud August. de Civ. L. 6. c. 5.

Revocantur igitur ad theologiam civilem theologia fabulosa, theatrica, scenica, indignitatis & turpitudinis plena, &c. quid enim aliud ostendunt illa simulachra, formæ, ætates, sexus, habitus Deorum ? nunquid barbatum Jovem, imberbem Mercurium, poetæ habent, pontifices non habent ? numquid Priapo Mimi, non etiam sacerdotes enormia pudenda fecerunt ? an aliter stat adorandus in sacris locis, quam procedit ridendus in theatris ? num Saturnus senex, Apollo Ephebus, ita personæ sunt histriorum, ut non sint statuæ delubrorum, &c. *Aug. de Civ. Dei, L. 6. c. 7.*

a Heathen saying the same thing of the civil and philosophical.

Neither does he say this of the worst part only of the Philosophical, but of that part which was defended by the most rigid and virtuous of their sects; for thus *Cotta* argues against *Balbus*; "Neither indeed can I despise the ignorance of the vulgar and illiterate, when I consider those things which the 'Sto-

"ics

• And yet we see from some passages of *Seneca* referred to by *St. Austin*, what a mean opinion this sect had of the established religion; since he is not at all more complaisant to it than *Varro* had been to the fabulous, and *St. Austin* had been to them both.

In eo libro quem contra superstitiones condidit (*Seneca*) multo copiosius atque vehementius reprehendit ipse civilem istam & urbanam Theologiam quam *Varro* theatricam & fabulosam. Cum enim de simulachris ageret, sacros, inquit, immortales, inviolabilesque Deos in materia vilissima, atque immobili dedicant, habitus illis hominum, ferarumque & piscium. Quidam vero mixto sensu diversis corporibus induunt; Numina vocant, quæ si spiritu accepto subito occurrerent, monstra haberentur, &c. *Senec. ap. Aug. de Civ. D. L. 6. c. 10.*

• Nec vero vulgi atque imperitorum inficitiam despiciere possum, cum ea considero quæ dicuntur a Stoicis; sunt enim illa imperitorum. Piscem Syri venerantur;

omne

"ics advance; the *Syrians* worship Fish, the
" *Egyptians* have consecrated almost every sort
" of animals; the *Greeks* have deify'd Men;
" and what do you Philosophers? have you
" maintained any thing better? &c.

This one would think was going far enough,
yet it has not satisfied the zeal of certain Mo-
derns: and as St. *Austin* has degraded the Civil
religion to the Fabulous, *Cotta* the Philosophi-
cal

omne fere genus bestiarum *Aegyptii* consecraverunt. Jam
vero in *Græcia* multos habent ex hominibus Deos, *Ala-*
bandum, *Alabandi*, *Tenedi*, *Tennem*, *Leucotheam*, que
fuit *Ino*, ejus *Palæmonem* filium cuncta *Græcia*: *Mercuri-*
um, *Æsculapium*, *Tyndaridas*: *Romulum* nostri, alios-
que complures; quos quasi novos & adscripticios cives
in cælum receptos putant. hæc igitur indocti. Quid vos
Philosophi? Qui meliora? Omitto illa, sunt enim præ-
clara; sit sane Deus ipse mundus, &c. *Cic. de Nat.*
Deor. L. 3. And yet see what a different conclusion *Octa-*
vius in *Minucius Felix* draws after the same enumera-
tion of all the sects of Philosophers, when beginning like
Cicero with *Thales Milesius*, he ends with this remark-
able sentence:

Exposui opiniones omnium fere Philosophorum, quibus
illustrior gloria est, Deum unum multis designasse nomi-
nibus; ut quis arbitretur aut nunc Christianos Philo-
sophos esse, aut Philosophos fuisse jam tunc Christianos.
Minuc. Fel. Octav.

cal to the Civil, They have almost reduced the Philosophical to none at all : This at least of the Stoics *Barier* would perswade us was downright Atheism ; and as all the opinions of the Philosophers collected in *Cicero* may be reduced to three classes ; two of them he assures us were incontestably Atheists ; and the third must admit the necessary existence and eternity of matter.*

But this, however, is a most outrageous censure of the Philosophic Systems ; and it might likewise be easily proved that the reproofs of the Disputants in *Cicero* have too

* Car enfin qu' on examine les Opinions des Philosophes, on verra qu' elles se reduisent à trois classes ; Je place dans la premiere ceux qui n'admittoient qu' une nature infinie a la verité & eternelle ; mais inanimés ; comme Epicure, Straton, & quelques autres. Dans la seconde ceux qui reconnoissoient un principe intelligent mais materiel ; tels que Zenon, & les Stoiciens ses disciples. Dans la troisieme enfin ceux qui soutenoient comme Anaxagore & Platon qu' il y avoit une intelligence immaterielle & infinie. Ceux des deux premieres classes estoient incontestablement Athées ; ceux de la troisieme plus éclairés & plus raisonnables sans doute, erroient du moins en ce qu' ils ne croyoient pas la creation ; & estoient obligés d' admettre l' existence d' une matiere indpendante

much asperity in them to be taken according to the letter; but there is little occasion for this as it has been over-done already; and some amongst the Moderns have carried the Philosophical Creed as much too high, as others have degraded it too low.

In the margin are drawn up two formidable parties 'for and 'against the philosophic religion; but the latter is the most so, as it seems resolved to supply in fury, what is wanting in proof; and but just to acquit some of Atheism themselves, who would not acknowledge it in the Philosophers: For thus is the
pendante & eternelle, comme l'intelligence qui forma le monde.

Banier, Mytholog. & les Fab. expliq. par P. Hest.
L. 5. 27.

Pfanner. System Theolog. Gent. purior. Schedius de Diis Germanis. Herb. de Rel. Gent. Martini Exercit. Metaphys. L. 2. Cudworth's Intellectual System, c. 4. Wolfius de Atheismi falso suspectis. Hasseus de Gent. Philas. &c.

Buddei Theses Theologicae de Atheismo & Superstitione c. 1. Id. de Spinozismo ante Spinozam. Foppius de Atheismo Philosophorum Gentilium Celebriorum. Parkerus de Deo & Providentia. Melinaeus de Cognitione Dei.

good L^d Herbert treated by the opposite side.
 Neither indeed is Herbert to be ranked with
 Atheists, properly and strictly so called: and
 the learned Kortbolt is of the same opinion."

Truly this is a most mild and candid cen-
 sure where the suspicions are so violent; it is
 a most gracious exemption from a *rack of*
wretches, for which L^d Herbert owes his ut-
 most acknowledgements, if it be rightly confi-
 dered how much he deserves to be ranked with
 them, for so obstinately defending the religi-
 on of nature; for this, it seems, was one of those
 strong proofs his adversaries had against him;
 which, if it had fallen into other hands, might
 have been much more dangerous to his re-
 putation.

When once an illustrious Modern is treated
 in this manner, where we have more oppor-
 tunities of discovering the heart; tis less won-
 der to see the same treatment of the Antients;
 whose

"Neque tamen inter Atheos proprie & strictè sic dictos
 referendus est Herbertus. Id ipsum quem jam laudavi-
 mus agnoscit Auctor doctissimus Christ. Kortboltus."

*Budd. Thes. Theolog. de Atheism. c. 1. Kortb. de Trib.
 Impest.*

whose sentiments in general are harder to come at, and who give themselves greater liberties in their reasonings and observations: Yet it will, I doubt not, give the good natured Reader *some pain*, though he be thus prepared for it, to hear that the excellent *Plutarch* has not escaped the above-mentioned *cruel* imputation, and that too, for no other reason than his saying that Atheism was preferable to *Superstition*: which is just such an evidence as it would be to accuse a man of adultery for saying that it was a less crime than murder. Though, indeed, even this evidence cannot be allowed, if we only consider the life and writings of *Plutarch*, which are of such a nature as to place him rather amongst the superstitious than the Atheists; and accordingly we find that even this compliment too has been paid him by another party.^b

In such a *perplexed and intricate case* therefore as this, where a man's sect is *unknown*, and

^a *Buddeus ubi supra.*

^b *Budg. ibid. Molinæus de Cognitione Dei, apud eundem.*

^c *Plus. de Superstitione.*

^d *Simon, Lettres choisies, Lettre 22.*

^e This is the case of *Plutarch*.

and from some obscure reasonings or unguarded expressions he *must* be accused of *one* of the above-mentioned crimes; the best method that I can propose to these candid spirits is resolutely to accuse him of both; and, as some Christians have rightly observed of the Deists, that no one is so credulous as an Infidel; to assert with the same confidence that no one is so superstitious as an Atheist, nor so Atheistical as the Superstitious.

We see in the ^dmargin an excellent method of clearing up this difficulty proposed by *Buddæus*; who has in part fulfilled what ^eMr. *Bayle* had conjectured on a like occasion before, "that the public would one day see a catalogue of Philosophers accused of Atheism, and would be sufficiently astonished at the

^a Enthusiasmus etsi toto cælo ab Atheismo differt, immo pugnare cum eo prorsus videatur: fieri tamen potest ut in Atheismum tandem abeat, si per *analogiam* quandam cuncta in essentiam divinam reducantur.

Budd. Theol. Theol. c. 2. § 5.

^e Peut-être qu'un jour le public verra un Catalogue de Philosophes accusez d'Atheisme; & ne pourra s'étonner assez de l'entêtement, de la hardiesse, ou de l'ignorance

"obstinacy, the hardiness, and ignorance of the
"accusers.

Mr. Bayle had too much knowledge of mankind not to be sensible that he had done enough to gain a place in this Catalogue; and if he expected it, he is not disappointed, for his Name is there: it seems more surprizing that when he knew this disposition of human nature so well, and had in his life time been an eminent 'example of its violence and outrage; he should yet say, that the public would be *astonished at these accusations*, especially when he had already taken particular care himself to prepare them for such events; nay when he had informed them, that it was too little to charge particulars with this crime, since whole nations had been brought in Guilty; that 'Possevin had wrote a book against the
Atheism
ignorance des accusateurs.

Bayle, *preface a l'addition aux pensées*, &c.

' Courte reveuë des maximes de morale & des principes de religion de l' auteur des pensées diverses sur une comète, &c.

' Ne parlons point des particuliers qui ont été accusés. *Possevin* n' a-t-il pas fait un livre des Atheïsmes des Protestants ? *Stapleton* n' a-t-il pas fait imprimer un
har-

Atheism of Protestants; that *Stapleton* had printed an oration recited at *Doway*, in which it was maintained that Heretics had no religion; and that it was a common reproach amongst the Catholics, that the God of the Calvinists was worse than the God of *Epicurus*.

But if the public had not sufficiently profited by Mr. *Bayle*'s information, they might by his example: who in this case seems to be a *singular* instance of human imbecility, and *unfortunately* to have forgot his own excellent instructions; since he has in many places of his works been more liberal of this compliment of Atheism to the antient Philosophers, than was either consistent with these particular reflexions, or his manner of thinking in general.

I cannot finish this digression better than by shewing the vanity and uncertainty of this sort

of
harangue qu' il avoit recitée à Douai, où il soutient que les Heretiques de ce tems là (il veut dire les Luthériens & les Calvinistes) n' avoient nulle religion, &c.

Bayle, ubi supra.

^a Je suis surpris que mon delateur qui a tant écrit contre l' Eglise Romaine, ait oublié le reproche qu' on nous fait assez souvent que le Dieu des Calvinistes est pire que celui d' Epicure.

Bayle, ubi supra. Daillé, reponse au P. Adam.

of judgment in a remarkable particular relating to the Stoical Atheism; of which it has been observed, that it approaches the nearest to Spinozism of all the systems invented by the ancient Philosophers; and yet the learned *Clemens* of *Alexandria*, and of consequence the learned *Eusebius* that quotes him with approbation, both assure us that the Stoics borrowed their notion of God from the ¹ holy Scriptures, and that the resemblance is too great to make us doubt of this supposition.

It is well therefore that in the present case we want no proof of what the ancient Philosophers really believed about the nature of God, and that they have excused us from reconciling these jarring opinions by leaving us more authentic accounts about their practice; which is all that is now necessary to ascertain: This then we know was conformable to that

Bayle, Dict. Hist. & Crit. dans les vies de Philosophes passim.

¹ Τα δ' ἱεῖς θεοῦ, ὅσα εἰναι τὸν θεὸν ὁ Στωϊκοὶ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων κατ' ἰδίαν, ὅσα καὶ ἀμείλι καὶ τὰ ψυχρὰ. — Πάσα ταῦτα ἀντιφύει τῷ ἱεῖς ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς.

Clemens. Alex. Strom. 5. Euseb. Prep. Evang. L. 13. c. 13.

316 *The Heathen rejection of the*

of the People, in whatever degree they differed from them in their principles; and they not only most devoutly assisted at the idol worship themselves, but strongly recommended and encouraged it in others; they fought their destiny like vulgar Mortals by means they ridiculed, and *pared with solemn and superstitious looks* over entrails they despised.

Even the best of the Heathens engaged early with strong and confident pretensions to merit in this hypocritical scene; and they persevered in it with constant and determined zeal to the last moments of their lives: of the truth of which the celebrated sacrifice of the Cock, which *Socrates* ordered to *Æsculapius*, must be an instance; or else it must be reckoned amongst those other mysteries of his life, which no age of the World has yet *clearly* explained.

But
 10^k There is nothing in the whole conduct of *Socrates* that is contrary to this supposition; both *Plato* and *Xenophon* in many places assure us, that he was no martyr to the Unity, nor ever denied the popular Gods; but that on the contrary he thought it right to comply with the religion of the State, and defended himself from the contrary imputation; or rather, he thought that such an imputation was too absurd to deserve any consideration, as appears from his answer to *Euthyphro*.

Christian Miracles considered. 317

But whatever gloom and obscurity the love of his friends, or the malice of his enemies, or, what is worse than both, his own ambiguous and vain pretensions may have thrown over his life, yet the general voice of antiquity will not suffer us to doubt that the wisest Philosophers readily acquiesced in the religion of their Country; and what is more, that they thought it their duty to promote it: Nay, what is more still, that they thought that not only all their industry was to be made use of in order to accomplish this work, but that all the powers of invention should be call'd in, if that should fail: that Heaven and Earth should be made to contribute to this important end, and that no fiction how extravagant soever should be wanting, which might be thought

Ἀποροὶ δὲ θαυμάσιαι ὡς ἔτι γ' αὐτοῖσι. Φησὶ γὰρ ποιεῖν
εἶναι μὲ θεῶν. καὶ ὡς καὶ ποιεῖν θεῶν, τὸ δὲ ἀρχαῖον
καὶ νομιζόμενον, ἱππάρχον τούτων αὐτῶν ἵνα ὡς φησὶ.

Plat. Euth.

In this answer he tells *Euthyphro* what he was accused of, and in it he seems to intimate that the accuser himself did not believe his own charge; at least he in this place thinks that it deserves no answer.

See on this point *Chrysost.* *Homil. in Rom. i. ch.*

318 *The Heathen rejection of the*

thought either proper to confound the understanding, or astonish the heart.^m

These are the sentiments of some of the gravest Writers of Heathenism, and agreeable to these sentiments were the practice of the most remote Antiquity; Hence the Thunderbolts of Jupiter, and the Ægis of Minerva; hence Earth-shaking Tridents,ⁿ Serpents, and Fire-brands; hence Harpyes, Gorgons, Furies and Chimæras; hence three-headed Monsters, and baneful Floods, and all the Stores of vengeance below, which were drawn out against the Vulgar, as the strong and irresistible Artillery of Heaven; but were in reality no other than the

^m Strab. Geog. L. 1. Polyb. Hist. L. 6. ad finem. Scævol. apud August. de Civ. Dei. L. 4. c. 27. Macrobi. Somn. Scip. L. 1. c. 2. Clemens. Alex. Stromat. L. 5. Sallust. de Diis et Mundo. c. 3. Phurnutus de Nat. Deor. L. 35. Cicero. de Divinat. L. 2.

ⁿ Καὶ πρῶτον τὰς μύθους ἀνελίξαντο ἢ οἱ ποιηταὶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αἱ πόλεις πολὺ πρότερον, καὶ οἱ Νομοθέται τὰ χρησίμους χάριν ὄντας. Οὐ γὰρ ὄχλον τε γυναικῶν καὶ παντὸς χυδαίου πλήθους ἐπαγαγεῖν λόγῳ δυνατὸν φιλοσόφῳ ὄντι. Ἀλλὰ δεῖ καὶ διὰ δεισιδαιμονίας τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀπὸ μυθοποιίας καὶ τερατείαις. Κερκυνοὶ γὰρ, καὶ αἰγῆς, καὶ τριάινας, καὶ λαμπάδες, καὶ δράκοντες, καὶ θυρεόλοχα τῶν Θεῶν ὄπλα, μύθοι, καὶ πᾶσα θεολογία ἀρχαῖα. Strab. Geog. L. 1.

Aique

the vain and ineffectual threats of creatures as weak and impotent as themselves.

As this therefore was confessedly the case with the Philosophers, I suppose we may fairly conclude, that the general opinion of the multiplicity of Gods would receive no disturbance from them, and of consequence would very much contribute to the end that was mentioned. — But this is not all that I would conclude from these observations; and I ought not to leave this topic without observing that the practice of the Philosophers had a very visible tendency to influence their opinions, and that some

*Alque ea nimirum quæcunque Achæronte profundo
Proditæ sunt esse, in vitæ sunt omnia nobis :
Nec miser impendens magnum timet ære saxum
Tantalus &c. ————— Lucret. L. 3.*

*Cerberus et Furia, jam vero et lucis egenus
Tartarus, horribilis eructans faucibus æstus,
Hæc neque sunt usquam, neque possunt esse profecto.
Sed metus in vitæ poenarum pro malefactis
Est insignibus insignis, scelerisque luela
Carcer, et horribilis de saxo jactu deorsum :
Verbera, carnifices, robur, pix, lamina, iade.*

Lucret. *ibid.*

Lucian calls all this very significantly the whole tragedy of Hell, Τὴν ἐν ᾧ πάσαν τραγωδίαν.

Lucian. *Philopseud.*

some of them, at least, would in the end be caught in the very snare which they had laid.

Let us enforce and illustrate this by a parallel instance. — The Institution of Image-Worship was in all probability at first designed to help our conceptions of God, and make us more earnest in our devotions; this is the account that a sensible *Heathen* Writer gives of it, and is likewise the principal foundation on which the *Idolatriy of Rome* is built.

Yet however plausible such an institution may seem, or however rational it may really be thought at first; in process of time it must naturally degenerate, and end in the vilest and most complicated Idolatriy.

As this is but an instance intended to illustrate the present point, we cannot now, what at another time would be necessary, prove the truth of it at large; we cannot run through the several gradations of Vice which arise from Image-Worship, and trace it *step by step* from its

• *Maxim Tyr. Dissertat. A. 9.*

• *Daniel. Histoire de France Vol. 1.*

Sur l' Heresie des Brise-images.

its *birth* at least in error, to its *final completion* in iniquity.

Let it be thought therefore at present sufficient that we are assured from Scripture that the thing itself is true, and that we know likewise from our own experience, that the like happens in events that fall daily within our observation; one of which there are few Christian Nations but have too much reason to remember; I shall mention it however because it will save me all farther trouble on this head, as it most strongly and powerfully supports the truth of the scripture observation.

A zeal then for the glory of God, and the propagation of Christianity, will I suppose be allowed by the most earnest Contenders for the worship of Images to be at least innocent and laudable as their practice with the restrictions above mentioned; and yet that this principle may proceed from zeal to heat, from heat to fury, from fury to false witness, from false witness to murder, from murder to persecution in all its *malignant and deadly shapes* I

sup-

322 *The Heathen rejection of the*

suppose we have long had most abundant conviction.

Neither can it be alledged by our opposers with any tolerable propriety, that this guilt is founded on an improper degree of zeal, and as such not warranted by reason or scripture; since the worship of Images likewise even in the most restrained sense is as little encouraged by either; and the sacred writings especially are not more frequent in their condemnation of any *one* vice, than this dishonouring of the glory and majesty of God.

But the truth of it is, that as in the former case it happens that in the progress of zeal, the

Saint *Austin* has given two reasons to account for this strange degeneracy, First, the great resemblance of Images to the most noble Animal, Secondly, the adoration of them by wise-men and Philosophers; to which we may add a third reason of greater weight than them *both*, which is the great veneration that must accrue to them from their being called after the name of the Gods they represented, from the general persuasion that they gave answers to the petitions of their Votaries, and that they were the Authors of all that variety of Miracles and Predictions which are spread over the Histories of antient times.—

Christian Miracles considered. 323

the passions, infirmities and interests of men are mixed with it, and growing by degrees less pure and holy, the zeal only at last is retained, and Religion laid aside; so likewise it happens in the worship of Images, that the honour of the Deity losing by degrees its influence, and the near and sensible *imperceptibly* gaining the superiority over the distant and spiritual, the Image only at last is retained, and God forgot.

And however surprizing this progress may seem, yet the truth of it will certainly appear from

times. — And to this persuasion the frauds of Priests, of Princes, and Lawgivers did not a little contribute.

Effigiem tamen viventi corpori similem, seductus formâ, et commotus auctoritate quasi sapientium institutorum, obsequentiumque barbararum sine vivo aliquo habitatore esse non putat. *August. in Psalm. 113.*

Quis autem adorat vel orat intuens simulachrum qui non sic afficitur ut ab eo se exaudiri putet, ac ab eo sibi præstari quod desideret, speret? Itaque homines talibus superstitionibus obligati plerumque ad ipsum solem dorsum ponentes, preces fundant statuae quam solem vocant, &c. Hoc enim facit, et quodammodo extorquet illa figura membrorum, ut animus vivens in sensibus corporis magis arbitretur sentire corpus, quod suo corpori simillimum videt, quam rotundum solem &c. *Id. ibid.*

324 *The Heathen rejection of the*

from the best support of truth in a like case, and that is from real experience and fact; since how laudable soever the Institution of Images may have been, and how laudable soever the intentions of their worshippers; yet all History assures us, that there is no Nation that used them which did not actually degenerate into the *grossest* Idolatry, and worship in the most *abject* and *servile* manner even senseless and inanimate things.

If this therefore was the case with the worshippers of Images, who used them at first
only

• Whoever doubts about the real existence of Image-worship in the grossest sense will see it abundantly shewn by the Fathers. *Origen. cont. Cels. L. 6. Justin. Apol. 2. Augustin. in Psalm. 113. Cyprian. de Idolorum Vanitate. Athenag. Apol. Tatian. Orat. Advers. Græcos. Lactant. Div. Inst. L. 1. Id. L. 2. Theophyl. Antioch. L. 2. Ad. Autolyt. Tertullian. Apol. c. 12. Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 1. Minuc. Fel.*

The last mentioned Author is particularly severe. Deus enim ligneus rogi fortasse vel infelicis stipitis portio, suspenditur, cæditur, dolatur, runcinatur. Et Deus æreus, vel argenteus, de immundo vasculo, ut sæpius factum Ægyptio regi, conflat, tunditur malleis, et incudibus figuratur: et lapideus cæditur, scalpitur, et ab impurato homine lævigatur: nec sentit suæ nativitatis injuriam; ita ut nec postea de vestra veneratione culturam; nisi forte nondum Deus saxum est, vel lignum,
vel

Christian Miracles considered. 325

only as a means to improve their devotion ; no wonder that many of the Heathen Philosophers should at length really believe the Religion of their country, which at first they looked upon as fabulous and chimerical.

The transition from the belief of *one* God to that of *many*, is not by any means so unnatural as the transition from the worship of an *infinite Being* to that of an *Idol* : — Brass and Stone have no adorable qualities in them at all ; but a *Neptune* or *Apollo*, a *Juno* or *Minerva*, have some pretensions at least to the esteem of those

vel argentum. Quando igitur hic nascitur? ecce funditur, fabricatur, scalpitur; nondum Deus est. Ecce plumbatur, construitur, erigitur; nec adhuc Deus est. Ecce ornatur, consecratur, oratur; tunc postremo Deus est, cum homo illum voluit et dedicavit.

It is true the Fathers were very zealous against these practice of the Heathens; but as they had once been Heathens themselves, they certainly knew what the Idolatry of the ages they lived in was, and would scarce confute a Chimæra; however the history of the world confirms their report, as well as the consent of some of the Heathens * themselves.

* *Senec. ap. August. de Civ. Dei. L. 6, c. 10. Id. ap. Lactant. L. 2. Heraclitus apud Clem. Alex. Admon. ad Gentes. p. 33. Vossius de Idololat. L. 9. passim. Polydor. Virg. De rer. invent. L. 6.*

326 *The Heathen rejection of the*

those creatures whom they are supposed to assist in their respective provinces.*

Add to this that though *Jupiter* himself is sometimes represented as *dissipated* in pleasure, and covered with crimes; yet at others he is described as presiding over the Universe with the *dignity* that becomes the Father of Gods and Men; from whence in time they might be brought to think either that the criminal pleasures were unjustly imputed to him; or
to

* *Arnobius* has made an excellent use of this persuasion of the Heathens, and if he could only have convinced them that Christ ought to be admitted into the number of their Gods (which *Tertullian* * assures us *Tiberius* himself desired) he would insensibly have drawn them to Christianity by their own principles: for thus he argues.

Ut enim Dii certi, certas apud vos habent tutelas, licentias, potestates, neque eorum ab aliquo id, quod non sit ejus potestatis ac licentiæ, postulastis; ita Unius Pontificium Christi est, dare animis salutem, et Spiritum perpetuitatis apponere. Si enim patrem creditis Liberum dare posse vindemiam, medicinam non posse; si Cererem fruges, si *Æsculapium* sanitatem, si *Neptunum* aliud, aliud posse *Junonem*, *Fortunam*, *Mercurium*, *Vulcanum*, rerum esse singulos certarum ac singularum datores; et hoc necesse a nobis est, ut debeatis accipere, a nullo animas posse vim vitæ atque incolumitatis accipere, nisi ab eo quem Rex summus huic muneri officioque præfuit. Hanc omnipotens Imperator esse voluit salutis viam; hanc vitæ, ut ita dixerim, januam. *Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 2.*

* *Tertullian. Apolog. cap. 5.*

Christian Miracles considered. 327

to look upon them as *lost* and *utterly swallowed up* in the splendour and Majesty of the Sovereign God.*

Without some such supposition as this, it will be heard to conceive the beauty of those sentiments of the Poets on the Creation of the World, and other very great and *astounding* acts of power; where at once forgetting every thing that is degrading to his nature, they carefully ascribe to him the attributes and properties of the one Almighty Being.†

What

* P. Thomassin, *L' Etude des Poëtes*. Liv. 2. c. 11, 12. Clemens Alexand. *Admonit. ad Gentes*. Idem. *Strom.* L. 1. Callimach. Hymn. 1. Chrysost. *Orat.* 36. Tatian. *Orat. cont. Græc.* August. *de Civ. Dei*. L. 4. c. 9. *Ibid.* c. 11. Ovid. *Metamorphos.* passim.

† Æschylus apud Clement. *Strom.* 5. Epicharm. Menand. Diphil. Orpb. &c. Apud eundem. Hesiod. *Theog.* V. 120. Luc. *Phars.* L. 10. Eurip. *Sup. Act.* 3. Sophoc. in *Oed. Tyrann.* Pind. *Pyth. Ode.* 6. Hor. L. 1. *Ode.* 12. Ovid. *Metam.* L. 1. Hom. *Iliad.* L. 1. Juven. *Sat.* 15. Claud. *de Raptu Proserp.* L. 1.

The following lines are taken from that Poet who is the most eminent amongst the Latins for sublimity of sentiment.

*Estne Dei sedes, nisi terra, et Pontus, et Aer
Et cælum et virtus? Superos quid quærimus ultra?
Jupiter est, quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris.*

Luc. *Phars.* L. 9.

328 *The Heathen rejection of the*

What effect this had on those Philosophers who reconciled their own and the vulgar Religion together, we cannot positively determine; however that there was in reality such a Religion is plain from the testimony of many, who assert that since it is beneath the dignity of the supreme God to trouble himself with the little concerns of this lower world, therefore he has appointed a multitude of subordinate Beings to govern and direct it.¹

But Yet none of the Poets have succeeded here (nor indeed in other places) better than *Homer*: nothing is more august than the consent of *Jupiter* in the first *Iliad*: I admire, *Homer*, says *Clemens*; the magnificent nod which you give your *Jupiter*, yet shew but the Cestus, and the Thunderer sinks. Σειανὸν ἀναπλάτεις ΩΜΗΡΕ τὸν Δία &c.

Clemens Admon. ad Gent.

¹ *Plat. in Conviv. Apul. de Deo Socrat. Iamblich. Porphyr.*

² *Origen. cont. Cels. L. 4. Philostrat. vit. Apollon. L. 3. c. 35. Diogen. Laert. L. 8. Aristot. Metaphys. L. 12. c. 8. Hieroc. Comm. in Aurea Carmina Pythag. Porphyr. vit. Pythag. Plat. Apol. Socrat. Hor. L. 1. Ode 12. Plaut. Rudens, &c.*

The *Indians* according to *Philostratus* in the place quoted above had just the same notions.

Καὶ τῶν ποιετῶν ἀποδεχόμεθα &c.

³ *Origen* who must have known much of the Heathen Theology in all its divisions, does not only intimate thus much of the Philosophers, but likewise affirms in many places

But besides that this is more particularly the doctrine of the Platonists which we have enlarged upon before; most of the other Philosophers had beside these Dæmons acknowledged some inferiour Gods who were chiefly concerned in the administration of the world;* which doctrine whether it sprung from, or gave birth to the vulgar Religion, must on either account be very nearly related to it.

There places that they worshipped Images like the Vulgar, and sometimes with the same sincerity.

Καὶ ἴστω ἰδεῖν τὰς ἐν σοφίᾳ μύγα φρονήσας, καὶ θεολογία, ὁμοιώματι εἰκότος φθάρτε ἀνθρώπου προσκυνήσας εἰς τὴν φασὶν ἐκείνην. &c. Origen. cont. Cels. L. 6.

Again, Ὅρῳ δ' οἶμαι &c. Id. L. 7. p. 362. Ed. Spenc. Arnobius who was a learned Heathen and famous Rhetorician * says the same thing of himself before he was member of Christianity; and he says it in such terms as can leave us no room to doubt of the fact.

Venerabar (o cæcitas!) nuper simulachra modo ex fornacibus prompta, in incudibus Deos, et ex malleis fabricatos, elephantorum ossa &c. Si quando conspexeram lubricatum lapidem, et ex olivi unguine sordidatum, tanquam inesset vis præsens, adulabar, effabar, et beneficia poscebam nihil sentiente de trunco, et eos ipsos Deos quos mihi esse persuaferam, afficiebam contumeliis gravibus, cum eos esse crederem ligna, lapides, atque ossa, aut in hujusmodi rerum habitare materia. Nunc &c.

Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 1.

* Arnobius Rhetor clarus in Africa habetur;

Hieronym. in Chronic. Euseb.

330 *The Heathen rejection of the*

There was one sect indeed, if we credit their Enemies, (which was every sect beside) that not only disbelieved the multiplicity of Gods, but the unity too; and yet it is not certain that even in this case the practice of their country-Religion, would not sometimes *mingle* with the most *determined* Atheism a *portion* of Superstition.

There is a remarkable passage in the life of *Cassius* which *Plutarch* has preserved to us and which on this occasion ought not to be passed over; who coming to the Senate with the other conspirators against *Cæsar*, and ruminating on that grand design just before the *critical time* of it arrived; he turned suddenly with zeal to *Pompey's* Statute, and devoutly implored his assistance to vindicate on that occasion the *generous* cause of his Country.

And what else but the *irresistible* and *all powerful* force of habit which we have so long been insisting on, could force from an *Epicurean* such

^b Καὶ γὰρ ὣν λέγεται Κάσσιος εἰς τὸν ἀνδριάντα τῷ Πομπηίῳ πρὸ τῆς ἐγχειρήσεως ἀποδίδων, ἐπικαλεῖσθαι σιωπῇ, καίπερ ἔκ ἀλλότρου ὣν τῶν Ἐπικύρου λόγων.

Plut. in *Cæsar* ad finem. Id. in *Bruto* apud initium.

such a piece of devotion as necessarily supposed the existence of Spirits, and utterly subverted the whole system of his sect?

But if other *Epicureans* of lighter faith, and lighter conduct might possibly fluctuate on less important occasions; yet what else could move this 'most excellent defender of his Country, who was so *uniform* in his principles, and so *severe* in his conduct, so *firm* in his resolutions, and so *cool* in his disposition?

There seems to be no possible reasons from the nature and circumstances of the conspiracy, why this thing should have been done; but there are many reasons why it should have been omitted; and if we do not admit that his country Religion had in this case got the better of his Philosophy; (*i.e.*) if we do not impute it to the *fits* and *impulses* of superstition; we can only recur to a less probable cause, the *fits* and *impulses* of reason; we must say that his soul led on as it were, and prompted by the singular greatness of the occasion had pierced deeper

• ΕΞ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἦν τῇ φύσει τῇ Κασσίᾳ δυσμείεια τις καὶ χαλεπότης πρὸς τὸ γένος τῶν τυράννων.

Plut. in Bruto. Cicer. Philip. 2.

332 *The Heathen rejection of the*

deeper into the state and condition of the Universe; that by this *powerful and impetuous* effort it at once acknowledged the immortality of the soul and the existence of the Gods, or at least saw so plainly the necessity of their existence, as *passionately to wish* that it was true; to *hope and pray*, that some superiour and powerful Being might never be wanting to defend the liberties of mankind, and, whenever the hand of men should fail, to *sink the prosperous plunderer* of his Country into eternal perdition.

The reason which ^a *Plutarch* himself gives seems to be something like this: but in all probability both the one and the other must give place to that mentioned before: and the only objection to it seems to be, that it is not easy to conceive how this could be the case with the *Epicureans*: — that men so utterly averse to all religious systems in general, could not easily fall in with so corrupt a one as the *Heathen*, that they who laughed at the providence of the Gods, and held sacrifices and Prayers, and Oracles, and Predictions, and every
part

^a Ὁ καιρὸς, (ὡς εἶκεν) ἥδη τῷ δεινῷ παρεστῶτος ἐνθουσιασμὸν ἐνεποίει, καὶ πάθος ἀντὶ τῶν προτέρων λογισμῶν.

Plut. in *Cæsar*.

part of public worship in such utter contempt, as to be obnoxious on this head even to the Philosophers themselves, could not well be guilty of such manifest hypocrisy, as to act on all occasions in direct opposition to these principles.

But they who make use of this way of arguing should consider that it is equally forcible against *all* the sects of Philosophers, as against this; since they all differed in some respects from the Vulgar: and though some did *more* and some *less*, yet their general coincidence with the common superstition will make them all guilty of this charge, though in a different degree. — It has been indeed in all ages the *hard fate* of the *Epicureans* to be singled out from the rest of the Philosophers, as more *monstrous* in their principles, and more *profligate* in their practice: but how unjustly, as in other cases has been already very fairly shewn, so in the present it is most apparent. The *Epicureans*, though they plainly denyed the providence of God, yet they did not think the

wor-

* *Lucian. Jupit. Tragæd. Cicero de Natur. Deor. L. I. Plutarch. Adversus Colot.*

† *Gassendus de vita et moribus Epicuri.*

334 *The Heathen rejection of the*

worship of him altogether in vain: since it was proper on account of the superlative dignity and ^a excellency of his nature: this notion indeed, it will be said, and perhaps that of God himself might only be maintained to avoid, as ^b Cicero says, the fury of the Mob; which is in part the true foundation of the Philosophic Hypocrisy in general: but then if this should be granted, which is ⁱ certainly not true; it should farther upon this plan be considered, that if these sentiments were only such as *might* be maintained for this end, they were likewise such as *might not*; and therefore *Epicurus* and his followers cannot positively be charged with the profession of them; especially as they have so openly declared the contrary. But there was another sect of Philosophers who could not in any one's opinion be allowed this subterfuge, and went so far beyond the *Epicureans* in their most flagrant absurdities, that they could not possibly have *any chance* for this mitigation of their follies: — These were the Pyrrhonists, whom the faithful ^k relator of their dreams introduces

^a Cicero de Nat. Deor. L. 1. Gassendus ubi supra.

^b Cicero, ubi supra.

ⁱ Gassendus, ubi supra.

^k Sextus Empiric. Pyrrh. Hypot. L. 3. c. 1.

as disputing in the *same* manner as the *Epicureans* against the providence of God, but concluding in a very *different* one. For as the former rightly deduced from their celebrated¹ argument that God did not concern himself in human affairs at all; the latter absurdly maintained that it was impious to say either the one or the other; that if God *did* concern himself in them, he must be the Author of evil; if he did *not*, he must be either envious or infirm.^m

This is indeed pushing the matter to the last extremity, and a Modern unacquainted with the Chicanery of these Philosophers would be apt to be in *some pain* for their proceedings; to look upon them as *lost* to human society, and absolutely *cut off* from every part of intercourse with Gods or men. But mistake them not: they will be found even with these principles to be good members of the Common Wealth; and what is more to be as constant

and

¹ Ἦτοι γὰρ βέλεται, καὶ δύναται πάντων προοεῖν, ἢ βέλεται μὴ, καὶ δύναται δὲ, ἢ δύναται καὶ βέλεται δὲ, ἢ ἔτι βέλεται, ἔτι δύναται. Sext. Empiric. ubi supra.

^m Ἐκ δὲ τούτων ἐπιλογιζόμεθα, ὅτι ἰσως ἀσεβείῳ ἀναγκάζονται οἱ διαβεβαιούμενως λέγοντες αἶναι Θεόν. Πάντων μὴ γὰρ &c. Sext. ubi supra.

335 *The Heathen rejection of the*

and regular attendants on the public worship, as those who came to it with a more settled faith and uniform conduct: and this account of them *Sextus* takes particular care to set in the front of the Chapter, where these strange opinions are related; as it were on purpose to remove any prejudices that might from hence arise; and to make a public and open declaration, that however odd and extravagant a Man's principles might be; however differing from, or inconsistent with the popular belief, yet nothing should ever excuse him from joining in the worship, and falling in with the Rites and Religion of his Countryⁿ.

After so strange and whimsical an account there will be little reason to wonder at a practice in *Epicurus* and his followers exactly conformable to this; of the former of whom it is remarkable that amongst all the invectives against him which *Laertius* has collected, (and he has collected not a few,) there is not one which charges him with want of piety to the Gods, which on the contrary, with its faithful

ⁿ Επειὶ οὖν προσηκόντες ὅτι τῷ μὲν βίῳ καὶ ἀναστροφῇ, ἀδοξίας-ως φαμὲν εἶναι θεῶς, εἰδομένους θεῶς, καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς φαμὲν. *Sext. ubi supra.*

attendant love to our Country, the same *Lucian* assures us was inexpressibly great.

And though piety to the Gods may in the place here quoted receive a different interpretation; yet the regularity of the Epicurean worship is so fully and amply described by *Plutarch*, that no other objection can be made to it, than what he there makes, its strange dissimulation.

But the Epicureans did more than submit to the public worship, they sometimes presided over it: and *Lucian* has informed us of one *Hermion* a Priest of that Sect who claimed precedence of *Zenobemis* the Stoic at an entertainment, purely on account of the sanctity that belonged to his function.

The Stoic indeed laughs at this claim, and thinks it a pleasant thing for an Epicurean to be

* Τῆς μὲν γὰρ πρὸς Θεὸς Ὀσιότητος, καὶ πρὸς τὴν πατρίδα φιλίας ἀλλοιῶν ἡ διάθεσις. *Laert. vit. Epicuri. lib. 10.*

Plutarch. adversus Colot.

† Ἐχε μὲν, ὦ Ζηνόθεμι, τὰ πρῶτα, Ἰφῆ, ἀτὰρ εἰ καὶ μή· δὲν τί ἕτερον, ἱερεῖ γὰρ ὄντι ὑπερίσασθαι καλῶς εἶχεν.

Lucian Sympos.

‡ Ἐγίλασα, ἥδ' ὅς ὁ Ζηνόθεμις, Ἐπικύρειον ἱερέα.

Lucian ibid.

338 *The Heathen rejection of the*

be a Priest: but from what has been already said it appears that the *pleasantry* is not much less on the part of the Stoic; and that, if it were not for a longer beard, and a greater austerity of outward deportment, his pretensions to that office would be much of the same nature.

Nay, if the thing was to be determined between these two by a better claim than their principles, which is the conduct of their lives, (though they both ought to have been excluded) the *Epicurean* seems to have much the advantage; since he was only accused of 'secret-
ing a few golden locks from the Statues of the Gods which he served, whilst the other was accused of being a Pandar to his own Wife, and forswearing money which a stranger had deposited in his hands'.

I will finish this topic with a remark on *Du Soul* the most excellent Commentator on *Lucian*;

• Οὐ σὺ μὲν τῶν Διοσκόρων ἦδη, ὦ Ἑρμῶν, τὸς πλοκαίμους περιέκαρχας χρυσοῦς ὄντας; Id. ib.

• Ἀλλ' ἔμετροπὸς ἐγὼ τῆς ἑμαυτοῦ γυναικὸς ἦδ' οἱ ὁ Κλεόδημος, ὥσπερ σὺ. εἰδὲ τῷ ξένῳ μαθητῇ λαβὼν τὸ Φόδον παραλαβήκας, ἐπειλὰ ὅμοσα κατὰ τῆς Πολιάδος μὴ εἰληφέναι. Id. ib.

Christian Miracles considered. 339

Lucian; who did not surely consider this matter as he ought, when he blames this Author for being so inconsistent with himself as to censure the Christians for abusing the Heathen Gods, when he had so often done the same. Whereas it now appears that what *Lucian* did was only in common with the other Sects of Philosophers; who blamed their country Religion in their *books*; though they defended it in their *practice*: but it was for a defect on this last account, and not on the former that the Christians were so universally condemned.

But whatever be the Interpretation of this conduct in *Cassius*, or however we may try to degrade the conduct of the Philosophers, and level on some occasions their religious Principles with the vulgar, I know it will be thought by some that this endeavour must be in vain; and it will be farther objected that this is so far from being true of the Philosophers, that it is scarce to be conceived of the people

* *Quid facias homini tam turpiter obloquenti? En tibi Lucianum illum, tam acrem deorum suorum in omnibus opusculis infectatorem, nunc sub nescio cujus personæ Christianos in invidiam summam idem ob factum adducentem. Du Soul in Lucian. de Mort. Peregrini.*

340 *The Heathen rejection of the*

people themselves; that the System of Polytheism was too absurd for the belief of rational Creatures in general; and that the Egyptians in particular from whence it sprang, could not really admit it, since at the very same time that they are represented as quite abandoned to Superstition, and immersed in Idolatry, they are recorded in profane and sacred Story as the politest and most improved nation any where extant in the world.

It must give any one that feels, some concern, to be forced in the course of his Subject

* *Maxim. Tyr. Dissert. 1. Aristot. de Repub. lib. 4. c. 4. Chrysostom. Orat. 12. Cudworth's Intell. Syst. c. 4. l. 27. Herb. de Relig. Gent. c. 15, 16. &c.*

The two last of these are very zealous for the Religion of the People; and *Herbert* maintains that notwithstanding its manifold corruptions, yet the five * following Articles

* *Nihilominus non solum quatuor articuli supra memorati semper steterunt; nempe 1. esse summum Deum; 2. coli debere; 3. Virtutem esse præcipuam cultus divini partem; 4. rescipiendum esse a peccatis: sed et hic ultimus, dari præmium et papam tum in hac vitâ, tum post hanc vitam, stetit, æternumque stabit. Herb. c. 15.*

Atque ita sed non sine multiplici accurataque religionum tum dissectione tum inspectione, quinque illos articulos jam sæpius adductos deprehendi, quibus etiam inventis me feliciorum *Archimede* quovis exultavi. *Id. c. 16.*

Christian Miracles considered. 341

so often to expose the infirmities of human Nature; especially when it must be done on some occasions with so much shame and confusion to ourselves: and as we observed on the head of Magic, that the belief of the absurd and impracticable things ascribed to it, ought not to be objected to by Christians, who under much greater advantages had been subject to the same; so likewise we may observe in the present case, that the Religion of Christ is not in many places so *pure* and *free* from error, as not to allow its votaries the *full conception* of the existence of Idolatry.

The doctrine of Transubstantiation and the infallibility of a Man, are full as extravagant

as
articles always made an essential part of it; 1st, That there was one principal God; 2^{dly}, That He ought to be Worshipped; 3^{dly}, That Virtue was the chief part of this Worship; 4^{thly}, That Men ought to repent of their Sins; 5^{thly}, That there was a state of Rewards and Punishments both here and hereafter: and in finding out these he says, he thought himself more happy than *Archimedes* in the invention of his Geometrical Problems.

It were pity to deprive any one of so sincere a satisfaction if we were ever so well disposed to do it, and it was really in our power; but a great part of this may be allowed consistently with what I have at present to observe on this Subject.

342 *The Heathen rejection of the*

as any thing that appears in the whole System of Polytheism, and yet these are *swallowed down* without any hesitation by several nations in the World, that are every way as accomplished as the antient *Egyptians*.

The truth of it is, there is nothing too absurd for those who plume themselves with the title of rational Creatures, to believe:—may these very absurdities have frequently took their rise from the very reason they boast of: this is indeed the case in the things just now mentioned; and as the *corrupt* Doctrines of Popery were really founded on the *sincere* word of God, and *stole* by degrees on the *unguarded* hearts of Mankind, so the system of Polytheism was probably founded on the unity, and made by degrees the same progress in the World.

It would not be proper now to enter into any profound and elaborate researches into the Origin of Idolatry, since my intention only is to

* *Plut. de Isid. et Osirid. Iamblich. de Myst. l. 8. c. 2. 3.*

† *Herodot. lib. 1. c. 4. Lucian. de dea Syria. Enst. Præp. Evangel. c. 6. 9. Lactant. Div. Inst. lib. 2.*

to shew how easy and natural the access to it might be: and this at least we may without difficulty conceive, who know from the history of Mankind delivered to us in Scripture, that they set out in their journey of life with right notions of the Godhead at first; and are likewise informed by other records of the *Heathen Nations* that it was common to speak of the supreme Being, by insisting severally on his various Attributes; which various Attributes being deified in their turns, many Gods at last arose from one.

That this was the case with the *Egyptians* we learn from the testimonies of ^{*}*Plutarch* and *Jamblichus*, and that the *Greeks* and *Romans* learned most of their Theology from the *Egyptians* is plain from the general consent of History.

But if it should be said that this notion of the rise of Idolatry would do indeed very well to diminish the absurdity of it, but that it is ^{*}too refined to be true; we will not dispute this

^{*} Many are of opinion that this is chiefly if not altogether the refinement of the later *Platonists*; but that it is not purely so appears from the testimony of *Plutarch* just now cited, as well as its being admitted by several Sects. *Plut. de Dogmat. Philosoph. Aristot. de Mundo. August. de*

344 *The Heathen rejection of*

this matter at present; because whether this, or any other which learned men have invented be the Origin of Idolatry, the unity must still in all probability be the foundation.

Maimonides thinks that it was owing to the Sun and Stars; but then he adds that men thought that these were the Ministers of God, and ought to be adored: *Vossius*, that it was

Civ. Del. L. 4. Arnob. L. 1. Senec. de Benefic. L. 4. Id. Nat. Quæst. L. 2.

Whoever would see this opinion maintained with the strength of Genius, and compass of Learning that is peculiar to him, may consult *Cudworth* in the 4th Chapter of his intellectual system.

* *Maimon. de Idol. apud Vossium de Idol.*

Most have adopted this opinion, amongst whom is our learned Countryman *Herbert*, who gives just the same reason.

Quæ perspicax eorum opinio effecit, etiam ut veneratio et non levis cultus illis (sc. soli et Lunæ) adhiberentur; non qualis summo Numini, sed qualis præcipuis ejus Ministris, qui in conspectum prodierunt, conveniret.

Herb. de Rel. Gent. c. 2.

Agreeable to this was the reply of the *Peruvian Inca*, who being asked whether any thing was greater than the Sun, said that this was only the Minister of God to carry his orders through the world.

Historia de las Incas. Garc. de Vega, l. 1.

owing to the belief of two principles, but then that it was after the acknowledgment of the good one; and not being willing to impute any thing bad to him, men substituted another, *Le Clerc* that it was owing to Angels and Spirits, which a great part of the world have contended for, but then that it was in order to procure their mediation between God and Man.^d

In

J'ai fait voir qu' elle (l' Idolatrie) n' avoit pas été d' abord aussi monstrueuse qu' elle le fut dans la suite: que l' idée du premier etre, du Createur de l' Univers s' étant insensiblement effacée, on l' avoit d' abord attachée a des objets sensibles; que les Astres, surtout le soleil, et La Lune dont l' éclat fraploit plus vivement, et dont les influences &c. *Banier. Mytholog. &c. L. 5. c. II.*

• De spirituum cultu sic censeo: ante animos humanos angelos divino affectos honore: ante angelos bonos principem malorum, quem κατ' ἐξοχὴν satanam dicimus: non solum tamen, sed una cum Deo boni omnis fonte. Originem hujus cultus derivo a corrupta tum traditione, tum ratione &c. *Vossius de Idololat. L. I. c. 5.*

Sic enim Collegerunt (homines) eum qui in se esset optimus, et omnis boni fons unicus, non esse miseris mortalibus mali ullius principium et causam, &c. Statui igitur oportere omnis mali principium; ac proinde illi facienda esse sacra, ut bonum consequamur; huic vero, ad malum averruncandum. *Id. ibid.*

• *Cleric. Index. Philolog. ad Histor. Philosoph. Orient. in Vite Angelus.*

345 *The Heathen rejection of the*

In short nothing is more natural to imagine than the rise of Idolatry in whatever light that rise be considered; it is altogether as probable as that *easy* supposition, that the successor of Saint *Peter*, on whom as on a rock the Christian Church was to be founded, should have a superiour degree of authority and power: The future growth of these opinions is indeed more surprizing; and it is shameful to observe how *high* the reason of man was raised in the one case, and how *low* it was sunk in the other; nay rather, how the *same whimsical and inconsistent folly* could cherish and bring to perfection two such *monstrous* principles, as not only were disgraceful to our natures, but destructive to our Being. — But yet I suppose no one will be at a loss to conceive how this might happen, when he considers what has been shewn before, and whas indeed has some resemblance to this, that *vast and enormous* progress of Image-worship and Zeal.

As

• If any one has a mind to be more fully convinced of this, and see the prodigious and unheard of impieties which arise from the infallibility of a Pope, and a Religion without God; in the one case Saint *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Romans*, in the other the doctrines and practice of the Inquisition will declare.

As this argument begins now to be very complicated it will be necessary to sum up the evidence of it, especially as by this means an evidence of the same kind will appear in the rest; and in order to this it may not be amiss to make two reflections on what has been already said; in the first place therefore I would not be understood to mean, in contradiction to what has been before advanced, that these Miracles imputed to the multiplicity of Gods were commonly wrought:—No, these Miracles were in effect as *unreal* as their Gods; the one only imaginary Beings, the other only imaginary Performances; but as both made a part of the vulgar Creed, they necessarily influenced their opinions in the degree we have been considering.

Secondly, It may be observed that though this system of Polytheism belonged to the People, yet it was not so generally believed by them, but that some suspicions must from the very nature of it arise; but as we have just now remarked of the Philosophers, that they would in the progress of their Idol-worship insensibly borrow something of the *Vulgar Religion*; so

in the head likewise of intercommunity of Gods it was remarked of the *Vulgar*, that they would insensibly borrow something of the *Philosophers*; but since both the one Religion and the other were unfavourable to the esteem of Miracles *seperately*, they must be unfavourable to it in *conjunction*.

The sum then of the present argument is this, that the multitude of popular Gods admitted amongst the *Heathens* did by necessary consequence occasion such a multitude of pretended Miracles, that they insensibly *lost* their force and *sunk* in their esteem. That though the *Philosophers* in general, and men of reading and contemplation could not but discover the grossness and absurdity of the *Civil Religion*; yet this could have little effect in the present case either on the *Vulgar* or *themselves*: not on the *Vulgar*, because it was the business of the wisest and most politic heads zealously to support and encourage them in their practices; not on *themselves*, because if they despised their Gods, they must despise their Miracles too.

But if what is still very probable, by constantly falling in with the prejudices of their
Coun-

Christian Miracles considered. 349

Countrymen, and by a faithful discharge of the practical worship of the Gods, they contracted by degrees such a veneration for the established Religion, that in many it almost effaced their principles, and got the better of this Philosophy: or if this Philosophy did in reality permit, as it did with many, such a number of inferiour Deities, as to raise their system but little above the Civil; then the force of the present argument will hold equally against them, as against the Vulgar.

In short whatever is the state of Religion with the People and Philosophers, however they differed from, or agreed with each other, in either case the credit of Miracles will be sure to suffer; if they agreed they agreed but to disregard them, if they differed, they differed for the same.

If the Reader should think however that the religious principles of the *Heathens* will only confirm the latter part of this observation, since there could not well be such a coalition as we pretended; this will make no Chasm in our reasoning, because the account of Demons will as forcibly confirm the former: and as

he

he now acknowledges that in the present Chapter he has seen the Vulgar and Philosophers take a very different rout, without any thing happening from that difference in favour of Miracles; so he saw them act with great agreement and uniformity in the last, without any thing happening from that agreement in favour of the same; he saw the bulk of the learned and illiterate world marching together in *one* *matly hand* to the *Country of Demons*, together admitting with one consent the numberless operations of the magical Art.

This agreement would again indeed be *broken* on the three former heads; as all those arguments brought to shew that no Miracles ever were wrought would influence the *Heathens* in a very different manner; but yet the very same consequences that we have just now mentioned must follow on any supposition that can be made; since those who saw into the cheat would be ill inclined to them in general; and those who did not could have no opinion of their weight.

In short *divide or unite* the Antients as you please; give them fabulous, or civil, or philosophical

Christian Miracles considered. 330

phical systems, yet no support in *any* of them for Miracles is left: the whole Pagan world affords not a *spot* on which an high opinion of them can rest: since the powers of Heathcism were combined against them, and with one part they must for ever be thought common, with the other part they must be thought vain.

CHAP.



CHAP. IX.

*Of the influence which Idolatry must have
over the Conduct of the Heathens.*

IF the Reader does not yet see sufficient reason for that extraordinary degree of incredulity which had possessed the Heathen world, we may yet consider farther, that the Religion likewise of *Christ* was as hard to be admitted as his Miracles.

That mild and beneficent Light which our holy Religion had introduced into the world, and which is fitly called *the Day-spring from on high*, was by the Heathens looked upon as baneful and destructive; it brought like a Comet dismay to their hearts, and shone with *malignant influence* on Idolatry.

The examination of this point in its full extent; *i.e.* the tracing of this opposition through every species of Idolatry, and shewing how

Christian Miracles considered. 353

exactly it fell in with the corrupt nature of man, by which it always attached him to its support, and hindered the belief of the *Gospel* which contradicted it, would be too much for the present occasion, as it is not absolutely necessary to our purpose at all: a few instances therefore may suffice.

Was any one then addicted to the *black and malignant* passions? did he burn for the murder of his Brother, or the oppression of his Fellow-creatures? there was no occasion for him to subue this lust of hatred, whilst he had * Gods before him, whose examples he might copy, and whose principal attributes were violence and revenge.

Or was he again abandoned to the *most infamous* pleasures? did he wallow in intemperance

* *Mars, Bellona.* To the former of these by the title of *Mars Ultor Augustus* built two Temples; the first after the Battle of *Philippi*, when he had revenged *Cæsar's* death, the second after the *Parthian War*.

Suton. in August. Ovid. Fast. L. 5.

The properties of the latter are sufficiently known from this line,

Sanguineum quatiens veluti Bellona flagellum.

Luce. Pharf. L. 7.

354 *The Heathen rejection of the*

perance and riot in excessive and licentious living? how agreeable must it be to him to find, that no mortification or even abatement was necessary; that he had not only Gods to authorize his extravagance, but that their very *feasts and sacrifices* made part of his crimes; that their temples were places of debauchery and excess, where *temperance* was banished, and *modesty* excluded^b?

But if he was covered not with one species of crimes but *all*; and if he had any intention

^b *Tertullian* says excellently well on this subject in the Person of *Idolatry*: *Sciunt luci mei et mei fontes et vi-
væ aquæ et ipsa in urbibus Tempa, quantum evertendo
pudicitiae procuremus. Tertull. de Pudicitia.*

And again, *Quæ Idololatriæ solennitas sine ambitione
cultûs et ornatûs? in illa lasciviæ et ebrietates, cum plu-
rimum victûs et ventris et libidinis causâ frequententur.*

Tertull. de Idololat. L. 1.

Ludi Floræ tanto devotius, quanto turpius celebrari so-
lent. *August. de Civ. Dei. L. 2. c. 27.*

But the Fathers are not single in their accusations of these extravagancies of the *Heathen* Worship; their own Authors are every where full to this purpose, amongst whom *Strabo*, *Herodotus*, and *Juvenal* have left such accounts as a *Christian* must almost blush to read:

Ὁ δὲ δὴ αἰσχρὸν τῶν νόμων ἔστι τοῖσι βασιλευσίν τε
ἐοῖσι, δεῖ πᾶσαν γυναῖκα ἐπιχερῆν ἰζομένην εἰς ἱερὸν Ἀφρο-
δίτης

Christian Miracles considered. 355

to compound for an infinity of failings, and farther, away the whole System of Morality for outward devotion; he still had a Religion that was not averse to the compliance with such detestable opinions; a Religion that quite groaned under the weight of Ceremonies, but was quite defective in point of virtue; that called aloud for the submission of all her Votaries to the former, but left them altogether at liberty in regard to the latter.

Whoever

ἵστας ἀναξὶς ἐν τῇ ζῳῇ μιχθῆναι ἀνδρὶ εἶναι.

Herodot. L. I. c. 36.

Again, Ἐναχῆ δὲ καὶ τῆς Κύπρου ἐστὶ παραπλησίως τὸ νόμος. Id. ib.

Ἀλλὰ καὶ θυγατέρας οἱ ἐπιφανέστατοι τῷ ἴθις ἀνθρώποις
καρτείας, αἱς νόμος ἐστὶ καλὰ πορνείας πολὺν χρόνον
παρὰ τῇ θεῷ, μετὰ ταῦτα δίδουσι πρὸς γάμον. ἐκ ἀναξί-
στος τῇ τοιαύτῃ συνιστῶν ἔθνος. τοιοῦτον δὲ καὶ Ἡρόδοτος
λέγει τὸ περὶ τὰς Ἀσκάς.

Strab. Georg. lib. II. de Venere Anaitide.

As the Romans at last were behind no Nation in shameful worship, some part of it was at least as bad as this; or if the public Concubines devoted to Venus were not in such reputation, yet their Temples abounded with private ones, or their own Satyrists belies them,

Quo non prostat femina Templo? Juven.

See the most shocking accounts in Arnob. cent. Gent. L. 5. passim.

The following lines of Persius will not perhaps convey to the Reader such an idea of all the substantial off-

356 *The Heathen Rejection of the*

Whoever will cast an eye on the public worship that is left to us of the ancient *Heathens*, and seriously consider in what it consisted and what it required, will not only soon perceive the truth of this, but likewise acknowledge abundant reason for their conduct in parting by such *slow and painful degrees* with their established Religion.

For what comparison is there between the difficulty of performing the *Heathen Ceremonies*, and the *Christian Commands*? between outward Pomp and inward Purity? between the

aces of life, that they might not easily be taught by unassisted *Heathens* in their Temples; and yet *St. Austin* challenges the whole *Pagan World* to produce any such instructions delivered in public:

*Disciteque, O miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum
Quid sumus, aut quidnam victuri gignimur: ordo enim
Quis datus: aut metæ quam mollis flexus, et unde
Quis modus argenti, Quid fas optare, quid aspernari
Utile nummus habet: patriæ charisque propinquis
Quantum elargiri deceat, quem te Deus esse
Fussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re.*

Perf. Sat. 3.

Dicatur quibus in locis hæc Deorum docentium solebant præcepta recitari, et a cultoribus eorum populis frequenter audiri, sicut nos ostendimus ad hoc ecclesias institutas, quaquaversum religio Christiana diffunditur.

And

Christian Miracles considered. 357

the *jolly* precepts which their Lawgivers had delivered, and the *severe* doctrines of mortification and self-denial? between the *mirth* and *festivities* of the *Pagan* Worship, and the *seriousness* and *solemnity* of the *Christian*? between in short the purification of the *heart*, which in the one case was effected by a little • salt and water; in the other must be obtained by the *strongest* resolutions and most *laborious* endeavours?

The Antient Philosophers seldom escape the fury of the Moderns, whenever there is an opportunity of making them feel it; accordingly

And again, Hinc est quod de vitâ et moribus civitatum et populorum a quibus colebantur illa numina, non curabant, &c. *August. de Civ. Dei.* l. 2. c. 6.

• Inter vescendum diis laudes canebant, et saltabant: cuius rei causam Servius hanc annotat, voluisse nimirum Majores nullam corporis partem esse, quæ non sentiret religionem; cantus autem ad animum, saltationem ad mobilitatem pertinere corporis. *Rosin. Antiq.* lib. 3. c. 33.

• Water was sometimes used alone, sometimes Sulphur was added, but Salt with it was thought most efficacious, especially the Sea water, according to that of *Euripides*,

Θαλασσα κλύζει πάντα τ' ἀνθρώπων καὶ αἶμα.

Potter's Antiq. V. 1. lib. 4. c. 4. *Rosin. Antiq.* lib. 8, *Serv. Annot. in Æn.* 6. *Juven. Sat.* 2. v. 157.

358 *The Heathen rejection of the*

ingly they are here represented by *Bosporus*, as sinking beneath the dignity of their profession, and beneath the dignity of that weak and imperfect system of Morals which they taught; since they not only fell in with the superstitious Worship just mentioned, but even encouraged certain vices on that occasion, which they were ashamed of on *others*; that Drunkenness and Immodesty, which are the *scandal* of the human Nature, were thought by them not *improper tributes* to the Divine: that they allowed Men to be vicious in honour of the Gods;

Ainsi le crime étoit adoré, et reconnu nécessaire au culte des Dieux. Le plus grave des Philosophes défend de boire avec excès, si ce n'étoit dans les festes de Bacchus, et à l'honneur de ce Dieu: un autre après avoir sévèrement blâmé toutes les images malhonnêtes, en excepte celles des Dieux, qui vouloient estre honorés par ces infamies; on ne peut lire sans étonnement les honneurs qu'il falloit rendre à Venus, et les prostitutions qui estoient établis pour l'adorer. La Grèce tout polie et toute sage qu'elle étoit, avoit reçu ces mystères abominables. Dans les affaires pressantes, les particuliers, et les respubliques vouoient à Venus des Courtisanes, et la Grèce ne rougissoit pas d'attribuer son salut aux prières qu'elles faisoient à leur déesse. Après la défaite de Xerxès, et ses formidables armées, on mit dans le Temple un tableau où estoient représentés leur vœux, et leurs processions avec cette inscription de Simonide Poète

that they made use of the intercessions of their Courtesans to *Venus* on distressful occasions, and attributed their deliverance to a race of Prostitutes that were fitter to *bring down* the vengeance of Heaven, than to avert it^f.

Some others indeed have entertained a more favourable opinion of the Philosophers^g, but on this occasion they need not be mentioned, because we have seen before, that whatever were their private sentiments of religious Worship, they fell in with the public; and we know that the gravest and most virtuous ^h Philosopher

fameux; Celles cy ont prie la déesse Venus, qui pour l'amour d'elles a sauvé la-Grece. S'il falloit adorer l'amour, ce devoit estre du moins l'amour honeste: mais il n'estoit pas ainsi. ⁱ Solon, qui le pourroit croire, et qui attendroit d'un si grand nom une si grande infamie? Solon, dis je, établit a Athenes le Temple de Venus Prostituée, ou de l'amour impudique. Toute la Grece, &c. *Bossuet, Disc. Sur. l'Hist. Univers.*

^j *Plat. de Leg.* 6. ^k *Arist.* 7. *Polit.* ^l *Baruch.* 6. 10. 42, 43. *Herod.* lib. 1. *Strabo.* lib. 15. ^m *Athen.* lib. 13. ⁿ *Ibid.*

^o *Modo hoc ratum et fixum maneat, haud ita insulsam bardamque religionem veterum, ac vulgo existimatur, haberi posse, quæ per tot sæcula inter doctissimos Philosophos, optimos magistratus, et fortissimos Heroes invaluit.*

Herb. de Relig. Gent. c. 14.

^p *Cato*, This story of him is recorded by many, see *Valerius, Seneca, Martial, Plutarch.*

360 The Heathen rejection of the

phor of the whole Pagan World did not think proper to hinder by the awfulness of his presence, those infamous diversions that were instituted to *Flora*,

Such therefore was the public Religion, and agreeable to such a Religion were the Prayers of its Professors: which not only consisted of light and empty requests, but frequently of wicked ones; not only ¹ Beauty and ² Riches and ³ Glory, which were the common objects of human wishes; but sometimes Theft, Hy-

¹ *Formam optat, modico pueris, majore puellis*

Murmure, cum Veneris sanum videt anxia mater,

Usque ad delicias votorum. —

² *Prima fere vota, et cunctis notissima templis*

Divitiae; crescant ut opes, ut maxima toto

Nostra sit arca foro. —

Juv. Sat. 10.

³ *Bellorum exuviae, truncis affixa tropaeis*

Lorica &c.

— tanto major famae sitis est, quam

Virtutis. —

Id. ib.

The form of Prayer used in common is conveyed down to us by *Athenaeus*, and takes in all these together, and whatever else was worth enjoying in *this* world, for the other was not once so much as thought of,

— Ὀλυμπίοις εὐχόμεθα

Ὀλυμπιαῖσι πᾶσι πάσαις. λαμβάνει

τὴν γλῶτταν, ἐν τῷ διδόναι σωτηρίαν,

Ἐγώ μιν,

poorly, and Murther found a place in their petitions.

Juvenal in his tenth Satyr has most poetically and feelingly described this variety of vain and empty requests, but he has not insisted on the wicked ones, which are left to us by *Horace* and *Perfius*; in the latter of whom a Man is introduced as praying for the destruction of his "Pupil to whom he is immediate Heir," and in the former, as praying to the Goddess *Laverna* that he might be successful in his Hypocrisy.

Both

Ἰχθυῖαι, ἀγαθὰ πολλὰ, τῶν ὄντων τι νῦν

Ἀγαθὸν ὄνησιν. πᾶσι ταῦτ' ἐυχόμεθα.

Menand. apud *Athenæum.* lib. 14.

But though this was the general prayer, in which there was some modesty, yet at their αἰτητικὰ, petitionary "Sacrifices," they prayed for the particular favour they then desired; and what sort of favours these were is here sufficiently shewn.

— *Pupillumve utinam, quem proximus Haeres*

Impello, expungam: namque est Scabiosus et acris

Bile tumet —

Perf. Sat. 2.

— *Pulchra Laverna,*

Da mihi fallere, da justum sanetumque videri,

Noctem peccatis, et fraudibus objice nubem.

Hor. Epist. lib. 1. Ep. 16.

• *Potter's Greek Antiq.* Vol. 1.

362 *The Heavens rejection of the*

Both of these indeed are supposed to offer up aloud to more reputable * Deities more reputable petitions : and the Villain of *Perfius* asks publicly for Wisdom, for Reputation, and Fidelity ; the other requests, by their low manner of making them, they are supposed naturally to be ashamed of ; yet this was a modesty super-abundant at least in one of them, who had a Goddess to support him in his most infamous requests, and publickly allowed to authorise his Crimes^r.

There needs nothing one would think after this, to shew the power and influence that such a corrupt Religion must have over the corrupt hearts of Mankind : yet this was not all that contributed to the infidelity of the *Heavens* ;

* *Jane pater clarè, clarè cum dixit, Apollo :*

Labra movet &c. ————— Flor. ib.

Mens bona, fama, fides, hæc clarè et ut audiat Messer :

Illa sibi introrsum &c. ————— Perf. ib.

* Fuit enim Laverna furum Dea, in cujus loco ut impunita essent furta, prædam fures fortiri, et rapacissimum quemque immolare tradiderunt. *Alex. ab Alex. L. 4. c. 16. Plaut. Cornicular. Rosin. Antiquitat. Roman. lib. 2. c. 19. Arnob. cont. Gent. lib. 4.*

The last mentioned Author has placed this Goddess in

them; for exclusive of this, they had been in common with other Men long used to a different Religion, *diffusion* of opinions, and *various* habits; the World in general on this account was exceedingly averse to so singular a Religion as that of Christianity; and the disputers of the Age could not bear to be controuled in their darling tenets by Men of low life and *disfranchisement* education.

The notion of a *Crucified God* could meet but with ill reception from those, who had used so frequently to enlarge on the *grandeur* and *majesty* of *Jupiter*, and it would still be apt to confirm them in their old prejudices against Miracles, to consider that they were wrought for the confirmation of such *strange* doctrines, and *unheard-of* opinions.

It
very excellent company; such at least as she herself must have thought so, as being suitable to her rank, and allied to her by profession. The Reader will see in the Original that they were *Discord*, *Bellona*, and the *Furies*.

Non commemorabimus hoc loco Deam Lavernam Furum, Bellonas, Discordias, Furias: et læva illa que constituit Numina, taciturnitatis silentio præteribimus.

At nob. ubi supra.

364 *The Heathen rejection of the*

It was not only the *Athenian* Philosophers that were surprised at the doctrine of *Jesus* and the Resurrection: the greatest part of the thinking World, wherever the Apostles propagated and explained it, seemed equally struck with its strangeness and novelty; were equally inclined to use it with the same contempt, and ask in the same *insulting* expression, *What will these babblers say?*

And though perhaps the populace of the several nations where Christianity was propagated

* *Acts 17.* There is likewise a strong insult of the leading part of the *Jewish Nation* to this purpose recorded in the Evangelist, * Have any of the Rulers, or the Pharisees (say they) believed in him? as if the Religion of *Christ* was fit only for the Crowd, who indeed attended to it first in this case, and Princes and Philosophers came after.

* *John c. 7, v. 48.*

* *Julian* is very confident in regard to this point, whose observation is recorded in his own words by *St. Cyril*, where, having first accused the *Christians* of the most bloody persecutions, he observes, that they were inexcusable on this head, because neither *Paul* nor *Christ* had commanded any such thing; though indeed, says he, the chief reason of their not commanding it was because they never expected that their followers could be invested with so much power; for they thought it sufficient if they could delude a few Men or Women of the lower sort,

ed did not pretend to argue with the science of the *Greek Philosophers*, and convict the Apostles of any inconsistency in their reasonings; yet what was the same thing in effect, they had each their several Systems of Religion to maintain, and Christianity contradicted them all; so that what was wanting in clearness and strength of argument, was abundantly made

and by means of these a *Cornelius* or *Sergius*; and this he says was so true, that he offers to rest his whole cause upon it, and if there was *one Person of reputation* in those times recorded in the number of the Converts, he was willing to be thought a *Liar* through all his Work.

Ἀπεσφάζατε ἐκ ἡμῶν μόνον τὴς τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἱμνησά-
ται, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῶν ἐξίσσης ὑμῖν πεπλανημένων αἰρετικῶν, τὴς
μὴ τοῦ αὐτοῦ τρόπου ὑμῖν τὸν νεκρὸν ἀναστήτας. ἀλλὰ
ταῦτα ὑμῖν μάλλον ἐστίν. ὕδαμῦ γὰρ ἔτι Ἰησοῦς αὐτὰ
παρίδουσι κεύθων ὑμῖν, ἔτι Παῦλος. αἴτιον δὲ ὅτι μηδὲ ἡλ-
πίων εἰς τὸτο ἀφίξεσθαι ποτε δυνάμειος ὑμᾶς. ἡγάγων
γὰρ εἰ Διραπάνας ἐξαπατήσουσι καὶ δούλῃ, καὶ διὰ τούτων τὰς
γυναικὰς ἀνδράς τε, οἷος Κορινθίῳ καὶ Σέργιῳ. οὐ εἰς ἰαὺ
Φωνῶ τῶν πικρῶντα γνωρίζομένων ἐπιμνησθεῖς, ἐπὶ Τιτίρῃ
γὰρ ἦτοι Κλαυδίῳ ταῦτα γίνετο, περὶ πάντων ὅτι ψεύδομαι
νομίζετε. *Jullien. ap. Cyrill. cont. Jul. lib. 6.*

Cyrril by his answer seems to admit the truth of the last part of the charge. *Celsus* in *Origen* makes the same observation. *Orig. cont. Cels. lib. 1.* And so does the *Heathen* in *Mimucius*, who calls the *Christians* *Lucifugax natio*, and in another place, *Homines Plautinæ profapiae*, which *Rigaltius* takes for a reflexion on their Poverty, of which *Plautus* was a memorable example.

made up with Superstitious heat, and Enthusiastic zeal; and where their opinion staggered, and reason failed, their inviolable attachment to this or that particular Deity still firmly supported them.

For we all know the mighty force and power of Education: every good or bad quality we have is in a great measure owing to it; a Man born among Savages is as liable to be made a Savage, as a Man born among Christians a Christian; and of all the customs and opinions imbibed either by a *Christian* or an *Heathen* Education, none are so deeply at first impressed, and so hardly afterwards obliterated as those of Religion.

Other tenets we may sometime or other be persuaded to part with, as being of a more indifferent nature, and having a less considerable influence on our lives and conversations; but religious ones we look upon in a quite different light, as more suitable to our nature, and of more importance to our happiness; where our *all* is in a great measure at stake; and where *one* wrong step taken is of infinitely greater loss and disadvantage to Mankind; than

than continual failings and mistakes in every thing else.

'Tis no wonder therefore that Men of such views and principles as these we have been describing should be so greatly averse to the admission of Christianity: they might in some measure be said to be *tyed down* from believing it; the *invincible prejudices* of education hindered them on the one hand, and all the *blandishments* of sense, and *allurements* of pleasure on the other.

But we are not yet come to an end of the force and influence of Idolatry; for in the third place it had joined to it the strong and powerful support of interest; and this not the interest of a few Tyrants or Governments, whose command cannot always keep in subjection their fellow creatures, but the interest of Priests, the interest of private Persons, and the interest of Communities.

There was scarce a member of Society however inconsiderable throughout the *Pagan World*, who had not some lucrative view in the

the maintenance of his Religion ; and Society itself had manifestly that *grand one*, which it ought never to lose, of hindering those manifold disturbances and commotions which religious quarrels are apt frequently to occasion.

The Reader I believe will not desire me to enlarge farther on this head, as every one of common observation and experience must have seen that wide and extensive dominion which interest exercises in the World : if therefore he joins this to those two other supports of Idolatry, prejudice, and pleasure, he will then forbear to wonder at its sovereign sway ; he will then confess that like the Magic of *Pliny* it held the hearts of its votaries in a threefold bond ; nay rather, that it was a sort of *Magic itself* ; that it was a *soft* but *powerful delusion*, which had *bewitched* the senses, and *charmed down* the reason ; which leaguering itself with every thing that might captivate the affections, had effectually *subdued and chained down* to its altars the whole human Creation.

In

• Ita possessis hominum mentibus quasi triplici vinculo, in tantum fastigii adolevit, ut hodieque etiam in magna parte gentium prævaleat, et in Oriente regum regibus imperet. *Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 30. c. 1.*

Christian Miracles considered. 369

In short one might almost affirm in the Language of Scripture that the *Stars in their courses* fought for Idolatry ; or, what is *stronger* than the Stars, the passions, the prejudices, the interests of Men.

Aa

CHAP.

C H A P. X*A Comparison between the situation of
the Heathens and Protestants in re-
gard to Miracles.*

I Have now gone through all the reasons in support of the opinion which I proposed to consider; and I flatter myself that with much the greater part of my Readers no other will be wanting to confirm it; but with *some* I suppose the novelty of this matter will be for ever a sufficient bar to its reception; and by *others* it will be objected that, notwithstanding all these reasons and many more if they could be found, they by no means account for the thing: that a rejection of Miracles so circumstanced as those of our Saviour, and of a Doctrine so salutary and useful to the world, could be owing to nothing less than an *universal* stupor of the mind, or an *universal* obstinacy and depravity of heart.

The

The former of these deserve no consideration at all; the latter deserve all possible allowances to be made to their diffidence, as this diffidence itself arises from so *laudable* a principle as a firm belief in the Religion of Christ; I shall therefore for their sakes add some farther degree of proof to what has been already given. — But how true this objection is in its utmost extent; that is, what degree of folly and wickedness must be necessary for the rejection of Christianity after sufficient examination, this I shall not now consider; since the case at first with the Heathens was that they never duly examined it; and at this one would think there could be but little reason to wonder after what has been hitherto said of the circumstances they were in: however, as we have nearly a paralell case amongst ourselves, I shall very willingly consider it on account of the persons just mentioned, especially as it will serve for an illustration of all that has been said.

The Protestants then, that have seperated from the Romish Communion on account of such doctrines and miraculous operations as plainly appeared to be the inventions of men, have ever since lived in a total indifference to

either; and notwithstanding the frequent and solemn assurances of the Papists, both of the continuance of their *old* prodigies, and the existence of *new* ones, we at this time reject, and utterly disregard them all.

Now this conduct of the Protestants is very much the same with that of the Heathens, except that there are several favourable circumstances to the latter, which the former cannot claim. — For the Protestants *were* brought up with a *veneration* for Miracles; the Heathens *were not*. — The workers of Miracles amongst the Papists were of the *same* Religion, excepting a few particulars, as the Protestants; the workers of Miracles amongst the Christians were of a Religion *totally different* from the Heathens. — The Miracles the Protestants deny were done to *confirm* the common Religion; the Miracles the Heathens deny to *shake* it. — The Miracles of the Catholics *we* can only avoid by denying them to be done; the Miracles of the Christians *they* could impute to several causes. — In short, *real Miracles* amongst the Heathens on account, of the multiplicity of Gods and Dæmons, were not sufficiently above the pitch of *ordinary operations* amongst the Protestants.

From

From this comparison therefore we must conclude, that if the Protestants think they do right in suspecting from the first appearance the Miracles of the Catholics; so did the Heathens in suspecting those of the Christians:—If the Protestants imagined that the admission of these Miracles would hurt the credit of the established Religion; so did the Heathens:—If the Protestants objected that these Miracles were said to be wrought amongst the people *abandoned to superstition*, and who would *stop at nothing* to advance the reputation of their sect; this likewise was the opinion which the Heathens had of the * *Jews*, and likewise of the Christians amongst whom these Miracles were wrought:—If the Protestants, in short, judge it reasonable to reject every Miracle of the Catholics without examination, because they

had
• This part of the Parallel is of consequence enough to deserve a separate Chapter, if this treatise was not already drawn out to so great a length: the very contemptible opinion which the *Heathens* had of the *Jews* made them apt to despise every thing that belonged to them, and of consequence Christianity that took its rise in their country: so that as the *Jews* themselves said formerly *that no good came out of Nazareth*, the Heathens expected no good from *Judea*, nor the Protestants from *Rome*.

374 *The Heathen rejection of the*

had been so frequently imposed on before; certainly more so were the Heathens in general, who had been *brought up* in illusion; with many of whom their *very polity was cheat*, their very Religion *imposture*.

But it may yet be objected that there is one very material difference in favour of the Protestants, which is of much greater consequence than all the rest put together; which is, that the Miracles of the Catholics are by no means equal either in number, weight, or credit to those of Christ and his Apostles.

As to the credit of them there is certainly no comparison to be made, since the scripture ones are *undoubtedly true*, the legendary ones are *false*: but this is not the point we are now considering, but the prejudices of the Heathens which made them in a great measure regardless of all sorts of Miracles whether false or true: Being therefore under the influence of these prejudices they rejected some things as *false* which indeed happened to be *true*, while the Protestants, being under the influence of the same, reject as *false* what happens to be so in *reality*; but if it was not, their conduct would in

in all probability have been the same, and *real* Miracles wrought now at Rome would meet with just the same reception from them, as *Chimerical* ones had done before.

The credit therefore of the Catholic and Christian Miracles being at present out of the question; it may still be observed that the Heathens are, in regard to the parallel insisted on, still on a level with the Protestants; since the *collected* Miracles of the Saints, whose lives are written by an Author of reputation, and who professes at the entrance of his work to *cut off* every species of them not well attested,* do yet amount to a much greater number than those, which in this case the Heathens are supposed to refuse.

But

* Si dans les autres histoires des Saints, qui passent pour certaines, il se rencontre de traits suspects de faussetés, je les donne pour suspects, quand je crois qu'il n'est point à propos à les Supprimer &c.

La premiere obligation que je me suis imposée dans le service que j'ay eü intention de rendre à la verité, a été de retrancher de mon ouvrage tout ce qui est visiblement faux, et la plupart des choses même qui m'ont paru telles après un nouvel examen. *Baillet, Vies des Saints. V. 1. Avertissements aux Lecteurs.*

But yet notwithstanding this multitude of wonders^b said to be carryed on for a succession of ages, and some of them to be wrought in the very Towns and Countries of the Protestants themselves; they are so far from keeping up the splendour and reputation of their first appearance

^b The *Parisian Saint* stands in the foremost rank on account of Wonders, as it is but reasonable such respect should be paid to her by a complaisant Author of her own country.

L' obligation ou elle se vid de ceder aux importunités de supplians fit que sa vie ne fût presque plus qu' un enchainement des Miracles. — C' est ce qui porta bientôt la reputation de la Sainte jusque aux extremités du Monde Chrétien, quoique ce fût peut être par une lumiere interieure plutot que par bruit de cette reputation qu' elle fût Connue alors et respectée du célèbre *Siméon Stylite*, l' objet de l' admiration de l' Univers, qui par un mepris general de tous les plaisirs de la terre s' étoit reduit à vivre sur une Colonne, ou il passa près de quarante ans en Syrie. *Baillet. Vies de Saints. V. 1. Vie de Genevieve.*

The Protestant Reader I imagine will on the present occasion be satisfied with the above mentioned specimen of this book, though he should be certified from the accounts of those times when it was published, that it met with such singular approbation, that two different editions were disposed of in the space of six months.

Les Vies des Saints de Mr. *Baillet* se debitent si bien, que les libraires disent que deux éditions faites à la fois feront vendues avant qu' il soit six mois.

Nouvelles de la republique des lettres. Juillet. 1701.

pearance, that even the workers of them are neglected, and their memory forgot.

And this likewise was exactly the case with the Heathen world, who not only despised all those Miracles which *Origen* assures *Celsus* were confirmed by the joint consent of two whole

Na-

If a Preacher of the word of God should be thought to deserve more credit than an Historian, see what the *French Cicero* says to this purpose in a Sermon on *Saint Benedict*.

Ses vertus cachees percent l'obscurité de sa retraite; des assistances impreveues lui survinrent dans ses besoins; les secrets du ciel lui sont revelez: les Elemens entendent sa voix, et lui obeissoient: les puissances les plus barbares vont à ses pieds perdre leur ferocité naturelle: les Demons en vain le maudissent, et demeurent comme enchainés autour de sa grotte: un peuple nouveau vient se ranger sous sa discipline; et Dieu lui decouvrant par sa lumiere eternelle les choses qui ne sont pas, comme celles qui sont, lui fait voir au travers des nuages du tems, la multitude, et la gloire de sa posterité spirituelle.

Flecher. Panegyriques et autres Sermons. Vol. 1.

But what is said of *Ignatius Loyola*, who deserved these extraordinary favours less, is proper to conclude this whole matter.

Que dirai je d' avantage? il penetre dans les consciences et prophetise quand il le faut, il passe par-dessus les loix de la nature, quand il a besoin de miracles pour appuyer la verité, au pour confondre les incredules. *Flecher* *ibid.*

Nations, * but likewise gave themselves so little trouble about *Christ* and his Religion, that even at some distance of time after his death they distinguished not his Votaries from the *Jews*; † nay some generations had passed away, and some shocks had been given by *Christ's* Religion to the State, before they were able to understand the History of his Life, or even pronounce his Name. ‡

Christus

* 'Αλλ' ἐρῶσιν Ἕλληνες ταῦτα (Θαύματα) μῦθοι, καὶ τοὶ γὰρ μαρτυρούμενα ὡς ἀληθῆ ὑπὸ ὅλων δύο ἰθὺν.

Orig. cont. Cels. L. 8.

In this case likewise the Parallelism holds, as the Protestants reject Miracles which more than two nations contend for.

† Judæos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Romæ expulit. *Sueton. in Claudio.* c. 25. *Tacit. Annal.* L. 5. c. 44.

Lucian gives the same account of them though he seems to have known more of the Christian affairs than most of his contemporaries, and in the opinion of some had been once a Christian himself. ‡

‡ Ὅτε περ καὶ τὴν θάυμασθην σοφίαν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἰξίμαθι, περὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην τοῖς ἱερεῦσι καὶ γραμματεῦσι αὐτῶν συγγενόμενος &c. *Lucian. de Morte Peregrini.*

* *Lactant. L. 4. c. 7. Tertull. Apolog. Id. ad Nationes.* L. 1. The last of these says, Nami nec nominis notitia inter vos; and the first shews the true reason why the name of *Christ*

‡ *Reitzii Sylloge de etate, vita, scriptisque Luciani.*

Chryſtus for *Chriſtus*, and *Chriſtianus* for *Chriſtianus*, was, as ſome of the Fathers inform us, appellations common in their times; and that this ignorance or neglect was not put on by them to ſerve ſome preſent purpoſe, is probable from the deſtiny their own Philoſophers met with, who oppoſed themſelves to the Chriſtian Religion; ſince, as *Chryſoſtom* informs us, every treatiſe of theirs againſt this Religion was in his time forgotten, and was no where to be found but amongſt the Chriſtians themſelves.⁶

So

was given to our Saviour, which he thought neceſſary in order to explode this error.

Sed et exponenda hujus nominis ratio eſt propter ignorantium errorem, qui immutata litera Chreſtum ſolet dicere. Erat Judæis ante præceptum ut ſacrum conficerent unguentum, quo perungi poſſent ii qui ad ſacerdotium vocabantur et ad regnum &c. Verum quoniam Græci veteres Χρίſτας dicebant ungi &c. ob hanc rationem nos eum Chriſtum nuncupamus, id eſt unctum, qui Hebraicè Meſſias dicitur.

The reaſon of the Heathens miſtake was probably owing to their imagining that this name was derived from goodneſs and not from unction.

Ἐν δὲ τῇ τι (βιβλίᾳ) καὶ εὐαγγελίᾳ διακρίνεται, ὡς καὶ Χριſτιανῶς τὰ τοιαῦτα τοιοῦτον εἶναι τις ἀπὸ τούτων ἀπέχεται βλάβη τινὲς παρὰ τῶν ἐκείνων ὑποτίθειν ἐπιβόλη.

Chryſoſt. λόγ. 2. εἰς Βαβυλ.

Spanheim, in Julian. Oper. Præfat.

380 *The Heathen rejection of the*

So mean and contemptible a thing we see in the eyes of the Heathens was our holy Religion at its first appearance, that even any thing relating to it was *sure* to be disregarded; and so unfortunate was the choice of the Vain-glorious Philosopher to establish his reputation by *opposing* the progress of Christianity, that this was the most *certain* and *effectual* means to have his work neglected, and his memory forgot.

But I suppose it will be observed that here the parallelism of this instance *in our favour* must end, and the parallelism of it *against us* must begin; at least that there is a circumstance that may from hence be made use of, that has a most *untoward aspect* on all that has been said: the circumstance I mean is, that as the Catholics by their pretensions to Miracles have an high opinion of their weight, and think them able to support the most *extravagant Doctrines*; so

Ἡ Ἀπιστία γὰρ, ὡς ἴσκει, τῶν ἀνθρώπων κατ' ἀρχαίς, καὶ πεπλάσαι νομιζούσιν τὸν περὶ τῷ Θεῷ λόγον, βεβόησαν αὐτὸν ἐπιδείξασθαι τοῖς ἀπιστοῦσιν ἵνα γένηται μῆνυμα τῆς πρὸς τὴν δαίμονα ὁμιλίας, καὶ διδαχθέντα ὑπ' αὐτῆς ποιῆσαι τὰδε. Καλίσαντα Ρωμαίων πολλὰς καὶ ἀγαθὰς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν δῶκε. Παραγνομένοις δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀποδειχθεῖσαν ὁρᾶν ἐπι-

to the pretensions of the Heathens on like occasions must necessarily suppose the same.

I will *strengthen* the present circumstance by what I had to say of *Numa*, and by one of the *scarcest* testimonies in the Heathen records, to shew what little apprehensions I have of my Artillery's being turned against me.

" *Numa* then, according to *Dionysius*,* not
" being able to gain the credit of his Subjects
" to his pretended conversation with the Goddess
" *Egeria*, thought it necessary to give them
" some *public specimen* of it; that from hence
" he might convince them that the Religion
" he introduced did *really* proceed from her;
" in order to this he invited many of the
" *Romans* to his house, who on their first
" coming found it poorly furnished, and every
" thing unprepared, but at their return in the
even-

ἐπιπλεῖναι ἑρωμένας τὶ πολυτελεῖς, καὶ τραπέζας ἐκπημάτων
γεμάσας πολλῶν καὶ καλῶν, εἰσάσιν τε αὐτοῖς παραθεῖναι
κατακλιθεῖσιν ἀπάσης ἰδωδης, ἣν ὁ δ' αὖτε πολλὰ πᾶν χρόνον
παρισκευάδαι τινὲ τῶν τότε ἀνθρώπων ῥάδιον ἦν.

Dionys. Antiq. Roman. L. 2.

evening found such a prodigious variety of costly furniture and elegant provisions, as no one of that age could possibly have procured in a much longer time.

It may be questioned whether there is such another authority as this in all the records of Antiquity, and therefore the objector ought to make the most of it; and that I may help him to do this too, let it be urged that *one Heathen* really thought Miracles of some importance to confirm his Religion; and though the same does not appear from any express testimony of the *rest*; yet there must always be a strong probability of it, whenever supernatural operations are ascribed to them^h.

The candid Reader will I imagine be in some pain for me on account of this *excess of indulgence* to so formidable an objection; but he will quickly be at *ease*, when he considers that I have nothing to do with it:—It concerns not

^h The testimony of *Livy* cannot be joined as a parallel one to that of *Dionysius* on this occasion; because there is nothing in the fact as related by him that could possibly convince the *Romans* of the validity of *Numa's* claim; and though the conversation with *Egeria* was indeed a Mi-

not use to remove vain suspicions about a fact, which has already been made clear; and as it has been fairly shown both from their own accounts, and from the nature of their principles that the *Heathens* neither *had*, nor *could* have an high opinion of Miracles, the reason of their pretensions to them must *shift for it self*; and I could be accused of nothing but want of discernment in the springs of action, if I imputed it even to *historical* principles, to a love of singularity, to wantonness, levity, affectation, or any other *caprice* that could enter into the human mind.

However as we have hitherto been so indulgent to the Reader as to humour him in his expectations without any apparent necessity; as we have given him a fair account of the *Heathens* falling into 'Idolatry and the practice of Magic'; though all that we wanted to

know

Miracle, yet it was such a one as wanted another to confirm it.

Qui (*Numa*) cum descendere ad animos sine aliquo commento miraculi non posset, simulat sibi cum Dea *Egeria* congressus nocturnos esse: ejus se monitu, quæ acceptissima diis esset, sacra instituere, &c. *Liv. lib. 1.*

* Chap. 8.

* Chap. 7.

know

know was, what they really believed, and not why; so in this place we will assign a probable reason of these pretensions, though all that we are in reality concerned with, is that low opinion of Miracles which has already been shewn.

We have seen before the public part of these accounted for in what was said of Prodiges; and some intimations have been given about those of private Persons in what was said of *Arctus*, *Pythagoras*, and *Apollonius*; let us add now to that, what may justly be added without any prejudice to this work, that the principal foundation of them all was the desire to gratify that passion for the marvellous implanted in the human Breast.

And as in the subject of Prodiges we saw Poets and Historians of every Age, very frequently

^a Chap. 3.

^b *Euseb. cont. Hier.* lib. 2. *Philost.* lib. 6. c. 10. *Id.* lib. 6. c. 11. lib. 8. c. 5. *1 Cor.* cap. 1. v. 22.

^c Ἀρχεται τοίνυν τῷ κατ' ἡμῶν λόγῳ, καὶ φησὶ δεῦ.

Cyrril. cont. Jul. lib. 2.

Καλῶς ἔχειν μοι φαίνεται τὰς αἰτίας ἐκδίδουσι πρὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους, ὅφ' ὧν ἐπίσταν, ὅτι τῶν Γαλιλαίων ἡ κατανοήσις πλάσμα.

quently giving into this folble *themselves*; so it could be no wonder if in the *Heathen* records we should see Wise men and Lawgivers sometimes making use of it to impose their Doctrines on *others*.

The wisdom however, the importance, the advantage and all that was excellent, must even on this supposition be according to their own declarations in the *doctrines themselves*^m: the Miracles were only invented to raise the curiosity of the unthinking, or, in words more frequently made use of before me, *to make the Vulgar stare*.

Exactly agreeable to this is the charge that *Julian* brings against *Christ*: and he lays it down in the *very* "beginning of his Book, as if it was a point too incontestable to be disputed, and what *Heathens* in all ages had too much experience to deny.

Accordingly we have seen before that *many* of the most extraordinary wonders of Antiquity

πλάσμα ἐστὶν ἀνθρώπων ὑπὸ κακουργίας συντεθέν. ἔχουσα μὲν ἑδὲν θεῖον, ἀποχρησαμένη δὲ τῷ φιλομύθῳ, καὶ παιδιῶναι, καὶ ἀνοήτῳ τῆς ψυχῆς μορίῳ, τὴν τερατολογίαν εἰς πίσιν ἤγαγεν ἀληθείας. Julian. apud Cyrill. cont. Jul. lib. 2.

quity were not only *disregarded*, but had in the *utmost detestation* by the *Heathens* themselves; and *all* of them are so light and fantastic in their nature as to be able to serve, when most importantly imployed, no other purpose than that just now mentioned.

Even this of *Numa*, notwithstanding the gravity of the relator, could not well be designed for any thing else: a Magical feast was a very improper thing to confirm a divine revelation; but it might answer very well the purpose of *Numa* in exciting the admiration of a *rude and uncultivated* People.

If therefore the testimony of *Diomysius* was allowed in all its force, and we were farther to allow that the Philosophers and Lawgivers of every age pretended like *Numa* to enforce their doctrines with Miracles, yet even on this supposition they must be thought light and insignificant things:— but even this cannot be allowed; since if this was generally the case, we should certainly find it oftener mentioned than it is.

But

* *Philostat. Vit. Ap. l. 3. c. 15.*

• *Id. lib. 6. c. 10.*

Christian Miracles considered. 387

But neither *Aristeus*, nor *Pythagoras*, nor *Socrates*, nor *Apollonius* ever asserted that their Miracles were wrought for this; and the most that can, in all fair and equitable construction, be concluded of their pretensions is, that the end of them all was to gain some reputation with the Mob, without making use of them to confirm their opinions: this is what the Reader might have taken notice of in many remarks already made: *Θαύματα μέρους* strongly implies it, as well as that observation of the *Brachmans*, that when they walked in the air, they did not do it to raise admiration; and yet as if no other reason of these practices could be found, this charge is afterwards insinuated of them by the *° Egyptian Gymnosophists*, as well as of *Pythagoras* himself by both *Poets and Philosophers*.

We see therefore the reason which influenced the bulk of the *Heathens*; and if a few should deviate from this path it would be no wonder; nay it would be no wonder if a few should have a higher opinion of Miracles than the

Plat. in Num. Timon apud Plut. in Num.

Πυθαγόρην δὲ γόντα ἀποκλίνοντ' ἐπὶ δόξαις,

Θίγη ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων, σεμνηγορίας Ὀαριστὺν.

the rest, and that *Numa* should be of this distinguished class.

But yet even this cannot be allowed; and I ought not to dismiss this head, without observing that as the testimony of *Dionysius* is unsupported by any general testimonies of the like nature in Antiquity; so, what is worse, it is unsupported by those Historians, who mention the case of *Numa* in particular.

*Plutarch*¹ relates the magical Feast in a somewhat different manner, but assigns no reason for its being done; and *Livy* not only omits the reason of *Dionysius*, but the fact itself.

Indeed this ought not to be wondered at in him, as he but just gave an Epitome of the fabulous times to his Countrymen who were supposed in some measure to be acquainted with

¹ Λίγεται γὰρ ποτε καλίστας ἐπὶ τὴν τραπέζαν ἐκ ἐλίου. *Εἰς*. *Plut.* in *Numa*.

² *Liv. Hist.* lib. I.

³ Ὅτι δ' ἐκ αὐτοῦ λογισμῷ καὶ προνοίας ἱμφορον ἐπὶ ταῖς παλαιαῖς τῶν ἱστορουμένων περὶ αὐτῆς ἐπράττην, &c.

⁴ Ἐτι γὰρ ἀγνοεῖται παρὰ τοῖς Ἕλλησιν ὅλην δὲ πᾶσιν ἡ παλαιὰ τῆς Ῥωμαίων πόλεως ἱστορία.

with them ; but *Dionysius* writing as he says to the *Greeks*, who had not so great a knowledge of those transactions, was obliged on this account to take a larger compass ; but though this motive did not influence *Livy*, it must have influenced *Plutarch* who wrote to the *Greeks* as well as his Countrymen had done before ; or if he did not, yet as he has thought proper to mention the *fact*, he ought surely to have mentioned the *reason* too.

But he is so far from doing this that the thread of his narration leads us to a *very different* reason : and he is in this place so more than ordinarily apprehensive of the fabulosity of all these supernatural transactions imputed to *Numa*, that he seems as it were to *entreat* the Reader to *abate* something of his belief, and to suppose that the whole truth of the matter was, that *Numa* had so broke and subdued the fierce disposition of the people by the practice of

Ταύτας δὲ τὰς πελαγημένας ὑπολήψεις ἐξελίξαι τῆς
διανοίας τῶν πολιτῶν προαιρούμενος, καὶ ἀντικατασκευάσαι
τὰς ἀληθείας, περὶ μὲν τῶν οἰκισάντων τὴν πόλιν, οἵτινες
ἦσαν, καὶ κατὰ τινὰς ἑκάστοις καιροῖς συνῆλθον, καὶ τισὶ τύ-
χαις χρησάμενοι τὰς πατρὶνς δικάσεις ἐξέλιπον, ἐν ταύτῃ
δηλώσει τῇ γραφῇ. *Dionys. Rom. Ant. lib. i. in præfati.*

of Religion^t; that they were ready to believe the most extravagant things; amongst which he has rightly placed that which we are at present considering.

The reason is confirmed by the testimony of *Livy*, who ought at least to be supposed to have seen as far into the intentions of *Numa*, as *Diomysius*: and upon the whole their joint authority ought certainly to be on a level with his, who was a *stranger* to the *Roman* affairs:

but

^t Ε'κ δὲ τῆς τοιαύτης παιδαγωγίας πρὸς τὸ Θεῶν ἰσχύϊ καὶ πόλιν ἐγεγόνει χειροῦθης, καὶ κατατεταμνημένη τὴν τῷ Νυμῷ δύναμιν, ὥς τε μύθοις ἰοικόμενος τὴν ἀτοπίαν λόγους παραδέχεσθαι, καὶ νομίζειν μηδὲν ἄπιστον εἶναι, μηδὲ ἀμύχανον ἐκείνῳ βυληθέντ^ς.

Then follows the relation of the Feast, and afterwards of another similar transaction, he says,

Πᾶσαν δὲ ὑπερέβλεπεν ἀτοπίαν τὰ περὶ τῆς τῷ Διὸς ὀμιλίας ἱστορούμενον. *Plut. in Num.*

^u Positis externorum periculorum curis, ne luxuriarentur ocio animi, quos metus hostium disciplinaque militaris continuerat; omnium primum rem ad multitudinem imperitam et illis seculis rudem efficacissimam deorum metum injiciendam ratus est. *Liv. lib. 1.*

^w Ἀρχομαι ἔν τῇς ἱστορίας ἀπὸ τῶν παλαιολόγων μύθων, ὥς παρέλιπον οἱ πρὸ ἐμῷ γενόμενοι συγγραφεῖς, χαλεπὰς ἄντας ἀνευ πραγματείας μεγάλης ἐξευρεθῆναι.

Diomys. lib. 1. in proem.

but if it should be said, as it may with great justice, that no one took more pains to search into this part of their history, and that his sincerity likewise is by no means to be questioned; yet, I know not how it happens, nothing amongst the *Heathens* can ever be interpreted in favour of Miracles: — Even here where the testimony of the Historian is unexceptionable, his history is not: and of this he has not only left frequent intimations himself, but others

Νύμφην γὰρ τινὰ μυθολογῶσιν Ἡγερίαν Φοιτᾶν πρὸς αὐτὸν.

Again, Οἱ δὲ τὰ μυθώδη πάντα προαιρῦντες ἐκ τῆς ἱστορίας, πεπλάσθαι φασὶν ὑπὸ τῇ Νυμφῇ τὸν περὶ τῆς Ἡγερίας λόγον.

Again, Τὸ μὲν ὅν, ἀκριβολογεῖσθαι περὶ τῶν μυθικῶν ἱστορημάτων, καὶ μάλιστα τῶν εἰς Θεὸς ἀναφερομένων, μακρῶν λόγων διόμενον ὄρων, εἶσω. Dionys. Rom. Antiq. lib. 2.

This affair of *Egeria*, *Cicero* has treated with still less reserve than either *Dionysius* or his Countrymen, and fixes it as the standard of all fabulous Transactions; for thus he answers *Atticus* enquiring into the truth of the *Quercus Mariana*, and whether it had a real or only poetical existence.

Et Mehercule ego me cupio non mendacem putari: sed tamen nonnulli isti, Tite, faciunt imperite, qui in isto opusculo non ut a Poeta, sed ut a teste veritatem exigunt: nec dubito quin eadem et cum *Egeria* collocu-

others have carryed it to such an enormous height, as even to question the existence of the principal transactions, which he assures us were copyed from their domestic records*. So that in whatever light this affair of *Numa* be considered, the credit of the relation must be sure to suffer; with those that think the highest of the *Roman History*, it cannot find a place amongst authentic Accounts; and with

tum Numam, et ab aquila Tarquinio apicem impositum putent.

The answer to this shews what *Cicero* would have done with it, if he had wrote the *Roman History*.

Quintus. Intelligo te, Frater, alias in historia leges observandas putare, alias in poemate. *Cicer. de Legibus Lib.*

Catrou et Rouillé. Preface a l' Histoire Romaine.

* "Α δὲ μοι δοκῶσιν ἀγαθὰ Ρωμαῖοι λαβεῖν ἐκ τῆς ἐκείνου τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀρχῆς, ὡς ἐκ τῶν ἐπιχειρίων ἱμαδὸν ἰσχυρίων, ἀφ' ἡγήσομαι. *Dionys. Rom. Antiq. lib. 2.*

This passage immediately follows the conversation of *Numa* with *Egeria*, and the Feast above mentioned: and the Records that are here spoke of are set directly in opposition to the *μύθια ἱστορήματα* which contained that relation: on which account we may conclude that *Dionysius* had a great confidence in these Records himself; however they have been contested by some Moderns; the chief of whom is the ingenious Author here quoted, and whose reasons in general are here set down.

Voilà les raisons qui m'ont fait regarder l' Histoire Romaine comme remplie d' incertitude. Elles sont fondées

with those that think the lowest, it must be the *fable of fables*.

But now setting aside at once every thing that has been here replied to the case of *Numa*; supposing that he and all the more ancient Pretenders to Miracles had not only claimed by them a sort of Divinity to their Persons, but a sanction to their opinions, and irresistible

audées sur la disette des Monumens, qui seuls peurent lui donner quelque certitude. Cette disette a été causée, ou par la perte totale de ces monumens, du tems de la prise de Rome par les Gaulois *, ou par le peu d'usage que les Romains firent de l'écriture pendant fort long temps, et leur peu d'application aux Sciences pendant les cinq premiers Siecles de Rome. J'ai tiré des preuves de cette incertitude, de quantité de faits ou manifestement faux, ou douteux, qui se trouvent repandus dans l'Histoire Romaine, et qui sont reportés comme certains. J'ai montré que les faits les plus marqués, et que leur importance devoit mettre a l'abri de toute alteration, sont souvent ceux dont la verité nous doit être la plus suspecte, et dont nous avons le plus de sujet de douter.

Dissert. Sur l'incertitude des Cinq. premiers Siceles de l'Histoire Romaine. ch. ii.

* Quæ ab condita urbe Roma ad captam eandem quinque libris exposui ; res quum nimia vetustate obscuras, veluti quæ ex magno intervallo loci vix cernuntur : tum quod et raræ per eadem tempora litteræ fuere, una custodia fidelis memoriæ rerum gestarum ; et quod etiamsi quæ in Commentariis Pontificum aliisque publicis privatisque erant monumentis incensâ urbe pleræque interiire. *Liv. lib. 6. c. 1.*

authority to their doctrines; supposing farther that these Miracles, instead of being light and fantastical in their nature, had been the most solemn and important, the most worthy of God, and beneficial to Men: in short, supposing the truth of every thing that can be said in their favour; yet what will from hence follow in prejudice to this work? that if Men had in early times a great opinion of their weight, they must at the time of our Saviour have the same? no conclusion can be more unnatural than this: and the direct contrary to it should rather be deduced from what has been already observed; since imposture after imposture must necessarily contribute to sink their credit, and systems of Philosophy adapted to their solution, must have a manifest tendency to reduce them nearer to the level of ordinary operations.

CHAP. XI.

The Conclusion.

AS nothing now can be more apparent than the neglect and indifference of the Heathens in regard to Christianity; so I imagine the reasons enforced with the illustrations in the last Chapter, will appear sufficient to account for it even with the most diffident and undetermined; but by a fate ever attending on contentions with the obstinate, I am aware it will still be objected by the *disputers of this world*, that whatever is the event of these reasons, the difficulty in regard to our Religion is not at all cleared up: since if what has been advanced about the Heathens in general is not true, we are but just where we began; if it is, yet still the proof of Miracles must be unworthy of its great Original, as it was unsuitable to the situation and circumstances of the world.

One had need of some patience, when instead of resting after the most wearisome pursuit,

suit, he is put to the disagreeable task of answering such an objection as this, which seems rather to proceed from a peevish temper, than a solid judgement, rather to come from one that was disposed to find fault, than one that could really discover it; it is a reflexion without sense on the conduct of the Almighty, and is altogether inconsistent both with the objections already urged, and the reasoning already made use of through great part of this Work.*

It has before been objected, and that very justly, that the Miracles of Christ were so powerful and convincing in their nature, that no one could easily reject them after due examination; and though the Heathens indeed by

* Accordingly I find, that the ingenious Mr. Law in his late discourses has made a like circumstance with this which is here objected to, a proof of the propriety of the time of Christ's coming rather than an objection against it; so that if his reasoning be admitted, my reply to this objection might have been spared.

“ From the many *false* lights which had been already
 “ held forth, and which only served to mislead and
 “ bewilder them; they (the Heathens) rather began to
 “ despair of finding any true one. Tired out with wan-
 “ dering through the mazes of error and uncertainty
 “ the

by reason of their prejudices were not disposed to examine them, yet are they altogether inexcusable on that account? — Was there nothing more alarming in the *real* Miracles of Christ, than the *pretended* ones of their Impostors? ^b And were not the prodigies of the Crucifixion of a more astonishing nature than the unmeaning ones of *Livy*? — Did the credit of them rest upon the same foundation? and were the People that wrought them equally to be trusted? — Was there no difference between wonder-working Hypocrites, who lived by deceit, and flourished by imposture, and such prudent and holy Persons, as cheerfully passed through the calamities of life; and boldly submitted to an untimely death for the sincerity of their opinions? ^c — Was it of no consequence

“ the wisest of them gave up all such pretended guides,
“ and looked upon the whole story of Revelation as a
“ cheat. Thus men were sufficiently guarded against any
“ new imposition, though never so well supported by
“ learning, wit and policy.”

Law's considerations &c. p. 144.

^d “Ου κενοῖς ἐπιστάμεν μύθοις, ἢ ἀναποδείκτοις λόγοις, ἀλλὰ μετ’ οἷς πνεύματος θεοῦ, καὶ δυνάμεως βεβήωσι, καὶ τεινέησιν χάριτι. *Just. Dialog. cum Tryph. 2 Pet. 1. 16.*

^e *Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 2. Origen. cont. Cels. L. 1. Id. L. 2. Tertull. Apolog. c. 46. Id. c. 5. Minuc. Fel. &c.*

quence for the distinction of Miracles that Prophecies were spread of the coming of the Messiah in almost every Nation? and would it not be some direction even to the Romans themselves to know, as they did, that *Judea* should be graced by some distinguished appearances at this time of the world? — Was there nothing alluring in the mild and peaceable doctrine of Christianity? or nothing amiable in the temper of its Preachers so different from their Philosophers both in their conduct and resolutions? — Was there nothing in short surprising in that rapid progress which the Gospel made in spite of the opposition from every side; and

This was of such consequence to *Lactantius*, that, as we have seen before, he rests the whole Christian cause upon it; and distinguishes Christ from the other Impostors of Heathenism chiefly by this circumstance; Quod neque Apollonio, neque Apuleio, neque cuiquam Magorum potuit, aut potest aliquando contingere.

Lactant. Div. Inst. L. 5. c. 3.

• *Tacit. Hist. L. 5. Joseph. Bell. Jud. L. 7. Sueton in Vesp.*

• The Non magna loquimur sed vivimus of *Minucius*, and the Veritatem Philosophi affectant, possident Christians of *Tertullian* might pass only for happy expressions, if the truth of them was not confirmed by the general consent of Antiquity. *Plot. Euthydem. Id. Protag. Lucian. Hermotim.*

and must it not occur to the thinking and sober mind that the blessing of Heaven must attend its propagation, when with no other weapons but those of gentleness and peace, it could so easily overcome the combined powers of the world? "

But there is no occasion now to insist on such questions as these, when the event shews that each of them had its weight; the more the Heathens examined them, the more they found them to be true: and the nearer they approached to behold the face of Christianity, the more they admired it, and the more lovely it

Hermotim. Id. Eunuch. Id. Vitar. Anst. Id. Reviviscent. Tertull. Apolog. c. 46. Id. ad Nation. L. 1. Minuc. Fel. Euseb. Eccl. Hist. L. 3.

Origen. cont. Cels. L. 1. Id. L. 2. Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 2. Minuc. Fel. Tertull. Apolog. c. 21. Id. c. 5.

Exquisitior quæque crudelitas illecebra magis est sceleris; plures efficimur, quoties metimur a vobis; semen est sanguis Christianorum. *Id. ibid.*

Itane istud non divinum et sacrum est, aut sine Deo, eorum tantas animorum fieri conversiones, ut cum carnifices, unci, aliique innumeri cruciatus impendeant credituris, veluti quadam dulcedine, atque omnium virtutum amore correpti cognitæ accipiant rationes, atque mundi omnibus rebus præponant amicitias Christi?

Arnob. cont. Gent. L. 2.

it appeared; till at length the Gods and all their holy absurdities gave way to it; till at length it triumphed over the powers of Heathenism, and overturned from its foundations that enormous structure of Superstition and Idolatry which ages and generations had built.

But supposing farther that this had not been the case; supposing that the Heathens had yet remained under the power of their prejudices, and utterly rejected the Religion of Christ; yet still is this objection most unreasonably urged; since the wit of man can invent no other methods of confirming a revealed Religion than that which has been already made use of, and that of *impressions*; and how much the former has the superiority over the latter, ^a has in another part of this work already been shewn.

I would not disgrace the great proof of our Religion by any farther comparison of it with impressions; and will only observe on this point

^a Chap. I. Yet only a part of this method is here considered, which are Miracles, to which must be added Prophecy; and as to internal proofs, we shall be able to judge of their validity, when the Divine Legation is concluded.

Christian Miracles considered. 403

point that if the proof of Miracles was really defective, there is no greater reason to complain of it, than of a like defect in our capacity, our memory, our judgement, our moral abilities, or condition. We may wish indeed that they were improved, though that wish seems to have something of impiety in it, when we cannot possibly see, consistently with the good of the general plan, how this improvement could be brought about.

But give me leave to add farther, what is of the greatest consequence on this occasion, that as these impressions are not better than the proof of Miracles in general; so likewise they were not more properly adapted to the circumstances of the Heathens in particular; since all or most of the objections which have been mentioned against Miracles, remain in full force against impressions, and of consequence they would have been possessed with equal prejudices against both.¹

I

¹ Quapropter arbitror quinque hos articulos tanquam notitias communes a Gentilibus selectas fuisse; alia porro omnia quæ ex Oraculis, revelationibus, vel somniis suis adheerent sacerdotibus, vel tanquam verisimilia tantum accepta, vel tanquam imposturam olentia, rejecta prorsus fuisse. *Herb. de Rel. Gent.* c. 15.

I shall leave it with the intelligent Reader to apply what has been said to the profane; after having first intimated to him that Miracles and Impressions went hand in hand, and as the various impositions of them both had been frequently by the Heathens in every age discovered, so they had just the same facility from the number of ^{*} Gods and Demons of accounting for their singularity, when they had not.

If he should however have the curiosity to know what one of the wisest of them has said about this matter, let him hear the divine *Plato* on the subject of *Homer's* Poetry, who says, "that God depriving the Poets of their
 " understanding, uses them as his *Ministers*,
 " *Soothsayers*, and *holy Prophets*, to make us the
 " hearers know, that it is not of themselves
 " they say such wonderful and high things,
 " not

* We have already seen in the Chapter of Magic, that the same Dæmons which were the cause of Miracles, were likewise the cause of Divination, Oracles, Dreams, &c. *Lactantius* confirms this account, Lib. 2. cap. 16. Eorum (Dæmonum) inventa sunt astrologia, et aruspina, et auguratio, et ipsa quæ dicuntur oracula, et necromantia, et ars magica, et quicquid præterea maiorum exercent homines, vel palam vel Occultè.

"not lying in their will; but that it is God
"himself who speaks to us, and pronounces
"by them."

"This, says the excellent Author who quotes
"it, is a strange saying to come from the mouth
"of a wise Philosopher; but if one uninfected
"with the Poetical Spirit was to search for
"the meaning of this (and other such high
"pretensions) in *Prose*, it would seem to say,
"that as there is no Poetry without Genius,
"so that Genius itself has its fits and seasons,
"which are provoked and indulged no where
"so happily as in the strolling unanxious life
"of an ΑΟΙΔΟΣ or Bard."

This is likewise a strange comment to come
from such an illustrious Writer; but if one
uninfected with the spirit of Hypothesis was

Διὰ ταῦτα δὲ ὁ ΘΕΟΣ ἱεραϊόμενος τέτων νῦν, τέτοις
χρηταὶ ΤΙΗΡΕΤΑΙΣ, καὶ τοῖς ΧΡΗΣΜΕΛΔΟΙΣ, καὶ τοῖς
ΜΑΝΤΕΣΙ τοῖς ΘΕΙΟΙΣ, ἵνα ἡμεῖς οἱ ἀκούοντες ἰδῶμεν
ὅτι ΟΥΚ ΟΥΤΟΙ εἰσὶ οἱ παῦτα λέγοντες, ἐν τῷ πολλῷ ἄξιᾳ,
οἷς νῦν μὴ πάρεσιν, ἀλλ' ὁ ΘΕΟΣ ΑΤΤΟΣ ΕΣΤΙΝ,
καὶ λέγων, διὰ τέτων δὲ φέγγεται πρὸς ἡμᾶς. Platon. Ion.

Enquiry into the life and writings of *Homer*.

Sect. 8. p. 128.

to search for the meaning of it in *verse*, it would seem to say, that he was under the influence of an opinion, which he was resolved to find supports for any where; which indeed he need not despair of, if he finds them here.

The plain meaning seems to be, that *Homer* was really inspired: and yet this upon *Plato's* plan could be no mighty matter: he had Gods enough ready on this occasion; the only difficulty was to find out such as were Poets; or if they were Poets, to find out such as excelled in their profession; since on account of the many lame performances which Oracles delivered from the God of Verse himself, they seem rather to have wanted *Homer's* assistance, than *Homer* theirs.— But raillery apart. These divine impressions will appear of very little weight, if we consider that many other Poets have in some particulars excelled *Homer* without them, or if they likewise partook of them in common with him, were yet in some other particulars not superiour to other men. Nay this very *Homer* in the opinion of *Plato* himself was very little obliged to the favours of his Divinity, since under the full possession of them he wrote so loosely and indecently, so irreverently of the
Gods

Gods in general, and that God who inspired him in particular, that he was not fit to be tolerated in a perfect Common-wealth. — In short, *Homer* with *Plato* seems to be just in the same condition, as *Paul* and *Barnabas* with the *Lycaonians*; the former was admired for his inspiration, the latter for their Miracle; but neither for the one nor the other were they so admired, but at the same time *Homer* could be thought worthy of banishment as a corrupter of the People; and the Apostles could be thought worthy of death as disturbers of Society.

It cannot surely be said after this with any tolerable propriety, that notwithstanding the truth of it, the proof arising from impressions must have had a stronger influence on the minds of the Heathens; since when two sorts of proofs have equal degrees of probability,* and equal prejudices against them, the one certainly may be rejected as soon as the other.

Miracles therefore, on a supposition of divine revelation must be wrought; and there is no possible objection left but that against the time when they were wrought; and he that makes

cc 3

this

* See chap. I. ad finem.

this, must have very little knowledge in *human* proceedings, and very little *modesty* in his judgement of the *divine*.

There is not in the whole compass of worldly affairs any thing more perplexed and intricate than fit times and seasons for the execution of our designs ; it is a point of knowledge so nice and delicate that he who is most versed in it is frequently disappointed. — A new face of things appears whilst the old one should remain ; and a fresh combination of interests or men, a sudden gust of ambition or revenge will defeat and confound the deepest and best laid schemes of human wisdom.

But if by any means the Politician should be so consummately wise or fortunate, as to select from all the stores of time the very best and most critical part of it ; yet still the simple spectator who moves at a distance from the Statesman's Orb, and has not *data* enough to form a right judgement of his whole proceeding, will frequently be ignorant of his manner of acting, and perhaps be inclined to find fault with that very portion of time which had been so happily chosen.

If

Christian Miracles considered. 407

If therefore in the petty states and governments of the world, it be so hard for some to find out the properest seasons of action, and so hard for others to know when they are really found; how vain must be the objection of a short-sighted imperfect creature against the complicated works of God? — A creature who is placed at such an infinite distance as scarce to discern the minutest link in his chain of action; or if he was raised to heaven itself, would be only lost and confounded in the immensity of his designs?

The justice and reasonableness of these observations have been so much insisted on by the Poets and Moralists of every age, that the Reader will excuse me from confirming them by that variety of instances, which may be produced; — There is one however naturally arising from this subject which ought not to be omitted.

We have seen before that the Religion of Christ was as much, or more opposite to the prejudices of the Heathens than his Miracles; and of consequence if one was unsuitable to their age and circumstances, the other must be

408 *The Heathen rejection of the*

is too ;—The objection therefore must suppose either that this Religion should be deferred to a more favourable opportunity ; or that it should have something of alloy and impurity in its composition, to make it fall in with the corrupt inclinations of the Pagan world.

In the former case it would happen, as it does in repentance, that mankind would still have been more unfit for it, the longer it was delayed : and the latter is a supposition too absurd to be made on the spotless *Author and finisher of our faith*.

I could, if it was proper, shew the inconvenience of any other part of time before the dispensation of the Gospel, by as many unfavourable circumstances as the objectors find in that which was really chosen ; or, which ought to have a greater effect on them, I could shew that this time was fitter on many accounts for the reception of Christianity, than the objectors themselves imagine it unfit on others.

I could insist with great appearance of reason upon the dispersion of the *Jews* into the most distant nations, and of consequence the dispersion
of

Christian Miracles considered.

of the Prophecies relating to Christ over the greatest part of the habitable world:—I could demonstrate the good effects which the general acknowledgment arising from them must occasion, and the power of it to bend the most stubborn heart, when Prophecy itself must fail.

I could further enlarge on the propriety of this time, as well on account of the great learning and knowledge which flourished in those ages; as on account of the grandeur and extensive dominions of the *Roman* Emperours.—Upon the former, because the greatest Genii and profoundest Scholars being confuted or convinced by men of low life and disingenuous education, might make the world inclined to believe that that Doctrine must have something divine and supernatural in itself, or attending upon it, which could thus break through the most learned opposition, and the most prejudiced education.—Upon the latter,

• *Porphyry* may be looked upon as an instance of this, who believing that the clearest Prophecies were composed after the facts, could have no conviction from them: and yet he might have received it from a tradition to which these Prophecies gave birth, before which tradition his own suspicions must fall.

because the example of an Emperor embracing Christianity would extend itself to the World, and the hearts of all his Subjects would in this case be bowed as one Man.

And if I was to say that this did in a great measure come to pass, and that by the conversion of *Constantine* only, there accrued greater advantage to the establishment and propagation of Christianity than either by the preaching of its defenders, or the blood of its Martyrs for three hundred years before, I believe the history of the *Roman* Transactions would bear me out.—And because this may seem a matter of some importance to many, I would for the present observe, that the truth of it in a great measure appears,

First, From the succession of Emperors after *Constantine*; none of whom (except his three Sons who reigned together) being directly descended from him, were yet all of them *Christians* except *Julian*¹, who yet was an Apostate

¹ *Buchocler. Chronolog. ad annum 363.*

² *Ammian. Marcellin. lib. 25.*

³ *Socrat. Hist. Eccles. lib. 3. c. 19.*

Christian Miracles considered. 411

passate from their Religion; and though *Yerim* his immediate Successor came to the Empire of a World much *Heathenized* by his contrivances, and was besides a Glutton^{*} and so shamefully given up to vices inconsistent with the purity of the Gospel, that he should naturally have had no great attachment to it; yet he had both refused to forsake this 'Religion under the reign of his Predecessor, and could not be persuaded after his death to accept the government, till the Soldiers had all declared themselves *Christians* as well as he[†].

From all which it may fairly be presumed that the noblest, and of consequence the meanest families in the Empire were for the most part *Christians* after the conversion of *Constantine*; though before it the *Christians* flourished indeed as a 'Sect, but still it was no more.

Secondly, The truth of this likewise appears from the state of the *Roman Armies* under *Constantine* and his Sons, and even from the state of the army of *Julian* himself; for not only

^{*} *Socrat. Hist. ubi supra. Sozom. Hist. Eccles. lib. 6. c. 3.*

[†] *Tertull. Apolog. Id. ad nationes.*

412 *The Heathen rejection of the*

only *Constantine* had taken special care to instruct the Soldiers in the doctrines of Christianity, but *Constantius* in particular called all of them together before the battle with *Magnentius*, and insisted that no unbaptized person should continue in his service: and though *Julian* had taken great pains to convert them, yet *Jovian* telling them upon his Election that he could not as a *Christian* command Men that were *Pagans*, they all cryed out; that
 “that should be no objection to his putting on
 “the imperial Purple; that they had before been
 “educated in those holy principles, the oldest of
 “them under *Constantine*, the rest under *Con-*
 “stantius, and that the short reign of him, who
 “was just departed, had not been able to infect
 “deeply the minds of those who had been de-
 “ceived.”*

Thirdly,

* *Theodor. lib. 3. cap. 3.*

* *Id. ibid.*

* *Theod. lib. 4. c. 1. Sozom. lib. 6. c. 3. Socrat. lib. 3. c. 19. Gregory says that many of all ranks in Julian's Army refused during his life to reject Christianity, πολλοὶ τῶν ἐν δυνασίαις καὶ ὑψίσιν, πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν κατὰ καὶ ἀριθμῶν μόνον γινώσκοντων. Greg. Naz. Invect. 1.*

† At quanquam a rudimentis pueritiae primis inclinatior erat erga numinum cultum, &c.

Ann. Marcellin. lib. 22.

Christian Miracles considered. 413

Thirdly, From the manner of *Julian's* behaviour before he was Emperor, and during his abode in *Gaul*; for though according to *Marcellinus*, he was from a Child addicted to Idolatry, and shewed his inclinations to some purpose after it was publicly established, yet he was forced to cover all this by a pretended zeal for Christianity, for fear both of his Brother *Gallus*, and the Emperor, and for fear likewise of losing the affections of the People who by the prevalency of Christianity for fifty four years, were now almost all of that Religion: nay even after he was Emperor, if we believe *Theodoret*, he was forced on this account to conceal his inclinations for a time.

Fourthly, From the express words of *Gregory* to this purpose, who deriding the attempt of *Julian* to extirpate the *Christian Religion*, as former Emperors had endeavoured to do, says,

Theodor. lib. 3. c. 3. Amm. Marcell. lib. 21. c. 2. Utque omnes nullo impediēte ad sui favorem illiceret, ad hærere cultui Christiano fingebat, a quo jam pridem occulte desciverat: et ut hæc interim celarentur, feriarum diem quem celebrantes mense Januario Christiani Epiphania dicunt, progressus in eorum Ecclesiam, solenniter numine orato decessit.

Theod. ubi supra.

says, that there was a manifest difference in the designs; because in former persecutions this faith was professed but by a few, but now it had taken so deep root, that to attempt to overthrow it, would be to shake and hazard the whole *Roman Empire*.*

Neither can this be thought one of those aggravations to which *Gregory* is much subject, if it be considered in the last place, that this Religion even in his own 'life time, had not only filled, but even overflowed the bounds of the *Roman Empire*; and that a very few years after this a great part of the, *Goths* had admitted the Gospel, purely out of compliment to their Benefactor *Valens*.

It was indeed a corrupted species of Christianity which they embraced, because *Valens* had

* Τὸ πειρᾶσθαι τὰ Χριστιανῶν μεταλθῆναι καὶ παρακινεῖν ἄλλῃ ἑτέρῃ ἢ τῶν Ῥωμαίων παρασάλευεν ἀρχὴν, καὶ πρὸ κοινοῦ παντὶ κινδυνεύειν, &c. *Greg. Naz. Invektiv. I.*

* *Bucholer. Chronolog. ad ann. 389.*

* *Theodor. Hist. Eccles. lib. 4. c. 27.*

* The *Goths* were at this time split into two parties under the conduct of *Phritigernes*, and *Athanaricus*; the former of whom being assisted by *Valens*, did in gratitude change his Religion. *Theodor. ubi supra.*

had embraced the same; and this is the true foundation of *Arianism* amongst the *Goths*; but still this seems to be a farther proof of the truth of the point we are maintaining; since it was the example of the Emperor, and not the force of truth which they principally regarded in this important event.

Such was the consequence of universal dominion in regard to the propagation of Christianity: but besides all this, I could yet display at large those many agreeable circumstances which must arise from that general and profound peace, which was at this time spread over the face of the Earth; and I could even deduce some favourable conclusions from that very state of Philosophy and Religion, which at present give birth to the objections.

But

Soon after this the two parties united; and then *Arianism* became the Religion of them both.

Theodor. ubi supra.

The Reader perhaps will have a desire to see some proof deduced from hence; he might have gratified it himself by considering what has been already said. He has seen before that the bulk of Mankind must on some accounts suspect the common Religion; and this suspicion being much increased by the long experience of

But as all these arguments and a thousand others of the like nature could never give us a perfect view of so grand and complex an event as the *propriety* of time for a divine Revelation, and convince us that it was right; so neither could as many arguments of a contrary nature give us a perfect view of its *impropriety*, and convince us that it was wrong: and the principal use that both of them can be of, is to make us modest in our judgements, and diffident in our determinations; to convince us that we ought not too curiously to enquire into the reasons of *Christ's* coming at this particular Season, nor impatiently complain that though Mankind was to be redeemed, yet their redemption was deferred above four thousand years:—to make us satisfied in short with what ought to satisfy every rational creature, namely, the strong assurance that God

in twenty Ages, the frauds of Impostors, and tyranny of Philosophers which we cannot now consider, might make them more inclined to embrace the offer of Christianity: and we have likewise seen that this did in effect come to pass, and that as the bulk^a of Mankind was at first led by Philosophers and Lawgivers, so now in their turn by first admitting the Gospel, they brought over by degrees their former leaders, in spite of the most violent and stubborn opposition.

^a Cap. 9.

Christian Miracles considered. 417

is a God of those perfections that he can never do amiss; and that his infinite Wisdom will be sure to find out the most effectual method of communicating that happiness which his infinite Goodness ordained;

Instead therefore of arrogantly finding fault with one method of Revelation without being able to substitute a better; instead of those vain and empty objections against its seasonableness, which can end only at last in the certain knowledge of our own imperfections, it behoves us rather to be convinced of them at first; we should set out in our enquiries with the deepest sense of our own infirmities, and the strong presumption there must always be against the abilities of a weak and shortsighted creature to correct, or even understand the inscrutable designs of God.

We have seen in some measure already in the consideration of Miracles what necessity there is for this modest and humble turn of mind; and not only these, but likewise the mysteries as well as precepts of our Religion most strictly require it; — there is a degree of

418 *The Heathen rejection of the*

Scepticism peculiar to Christianity, which no *Christian* can want, without exposing himself on the one hand to the *bold and confident pretensions* of human Wisdom, or losing himself on the other in the *profound and mysterious abysses* of the Divine proceedings.

Every one therefore who names the Name of *Christ*, should in all his actions put on this meek, this teachable disposition; should always endeavour in the language of the Apostle to be *cloathed with humility*: should have the sense at least to be convinced of the Wisdom of God, and his abilities to know in the propagation of his Religion what temper of mind that Religion required: and should upon the whole in consequence of this, so far permit its precepts to perswade his reason, and its mysteries to subdue his pride, that in every conflict with these, the highest pitch of human Abilities may give way, and admit with all proper and decent submission the unerring doctrines of Heaven.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

T H E E N D.

